



# BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



**Brandon M. Scott**  
Mayor

**Michael S. Harrison**  
Police Commissioner

February 1, 2023

Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council  
Room 400, City Hall  
100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

**RE: City Council Bill #22-0139R  
Investigative Hearing—Human Trafficking Investigations  
and Prosecution**

Dear Council President Mosby and Members of the City Council:

The Baltimore Police Department (BPD) has reviewed Council Bill 22-0139R, for the purpose of inviting representatives from the Baltimore City Office of the State's Attorney, the Baltimore Police Department, the Baltimore City Fire Department, the Baltimore City Public School System Police, the Baltimore City Sheriff's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Homeland Security Investigations, the Maryland State Police, the Maryland United States Attorney's Office, the Maryland Department of Social Services, the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, The Hope Center (formerly known as Baltimore Child Abuse Center), BlueDOT, and other collaborators from the Baltimore Human Trafficking Collaborative who provide identified victims of human trafficking with emergency interventions and supportive services, to brief the City Council on the scope of the human trafficking problem in Baltimore City, current efforts to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of human trafficking, further strategies that could be implemented to bring these individuals to justice, and resources that are needed to assist survivors of human trafficking.

There are a number of factors that make Maryland a popular destination or transfer state for trafficking. Access to Interstate I-95, a variety of transit hubs, and proximity to New York City and Washington DC make it easy to move and lure victims in plain sight. BPD understands that to address this problem it takes a well-trained unit and strong bonds with state, local, and federal partners.

The Human Trafficking Unit is under BPD's Special Investigations section. The unit is currently comprised of six detectives including two Child Trafficking Investigators, three Adult Trafficking Investigators, and one Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Investigator. Training for these detectives includes attending a Human Trafficking seminar for Law Enforcement hosted by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and attending AUSA's training for law enforcement hosted at the Maryland State Police Training Facility.

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Detectives also receive training on the dark web, sexual assault, and child interviews. Each detective and victim advocate must attend a week- long forensic interview training in Huntsville, Alabama.


In addition to required training, our detectives are always looking for ways to increase their knowledge on sex crimes and trafficking. Collectively Detectives in the Special Investigations Unit have received additional training in a variety of topics including undercover operations, Internet Crimes Against Children Investigative Techniques, and Undercover Chat Techniques and Bit Torrent Investigations.

In order to properly assist victims and investigate trafficking crimes, BPD detectives' partner with community-based organizations and thoroughly investigate tips. Tips are assigned to an investigator and the investigator will try to identify, locate, and interview the victim. Services are also provided to the victim if they are willing to participate. BPD has a strong partnership with service providers such as:

- Center for Hope
- Araminta
- TurnAround
- Drink from the Well
- My Voice My Choice
- Catherine's Cottage
- UMB Roar Center
- Interstate Pact
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

Human Trafficking remains prevalent across the globe and in all parts of society. We appreciate the City Council for shedding a light on this topic and look forward to robust discussion. Thank you for allowing us to comment on this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,



Michelle Wirzberger, Esq.  
Chief of Staff

cc: Natwana Austin, Executive Secretary of the Baltimore City Council  
Nina Themelis, Special Assistant and Legislative Liaison, MOGR  
Andrew Smullian, BPD Deputy Chief of Staff

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