



November 27, 2018

The Honorable President and Members
of the Baltimore City Council
Attn: Natawna B. Austin, Executive Secretary
Room 409, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Re: City Council Bill 18-0296 Licensing and Regulation – National Human Trafficking
Resource Center Hotline Information Sign Posting

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Mayor's Office of Human Services ("MOHS") has reviewed City Council Bill 18-0296, entitled, "Licensing and Regulation – National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline Information Sign Posting." This legislation would require national human trafficking prevention signage to be posted and maintained on the premises of adult entertainment businesses, food service facilities, hotels, licensed construction contracting services and massage establishments.

From a Human Services perspective, Council Bill #18-0296 represents a common sense plan for educating the public about issues related to human trafficking, its broad impact and the importance of linking victims to supportive services. In particular, MOHS works closely with providers and advocates to address issues related to youth homelessness. This bill has the potential to benefit this group immensely.

Local studies conducted by MOHS have identified at least 1,400 youth experiencing homelessness in Baltimore over the course of a year. This number is anticipated to be a low estimate due to the difficulties in identifying and counting youth. Some additional numbers to note:

- 27% of youth experiencing homelessness in Baltimore report that they are living with a stranger or in a location not meant for human habitation – such as outdoors, in a car, or in abandoned/vacant housing. These youth, without any support for housing or temporary shelter, are at the highest risk of being trafficked.
- 7% of youth experiencing homelessness in Baltimore report that they receive their income through sex work which can be closely tied to human trafficking.

Nationally, an estimated 4.2 million young people (ages 13-25) experience homelessness annually, including 700,000 unaccompanied youth ages 13 to 17, according to research from Chapin Hall at The University of Chicago. Many of those young people will become victims of human trafficking. Research from numerous studies have found trafficking rates among youth and young adults experiencing homelessness ranging from 19% to 40%. Although the varying populations and methods of these studies do not allow for a definitive number, using lower end estimates, this means that approximately 800,000 of the youth and young adults who experience homelessness in a year may also be victims of human trafficking.

Interviews with youth who participated in the Chapin Hall study illustrate some common intersections between homelessness and human trafficking¹:

- Basic needs, such as the lack of a safe place to sleep often play a role in trafficking experiences.
- Homelessness and trafficking begin early, often well before age 18.
- LGBTQ youth and youth who have been in foster care experience trafficking at higher rates than other youth experiencing homelessness.
- Girls and young women are more likely to experience trafficking, but boys and young men also experience high levels of trafficking.
- Youth experiencing homelessness who have also been victims of sex trafficking are more likely to experience mental health and substance use issues.

Council Bill #18-0296 provides a reasonable framework for expanding public education on human trafficking, it is likely to lead to increased public reporting and will ultimately increase the utilization of supportive services for youth and adults. For these reasons, the Mayor's Office of Human Services recommends a favorable report on Council Bill #18-0296.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Hickey', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Terry F. Hickey
Director