


F R O M	Name & Title	Dr. Letitia Dzirasa, Commissioner	Health Department  AGENCY REPORT	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201		
	Subject/ Position:	21-0038 – Human-Trafficking Notice Requirements - Modifications <b>FAVORABLE</b>		

To: President and Members  
of the City Council  
c/o 409 City Hall

March 24, 2021

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Bill #21-0038, entitled, “Human-Trafficking Notice Requirements - Modifications.” The purpose of this bill is to require “city-owned and -occupied buildings to place a notice regarding the human-trafficking prevention hotline” at certain locations.

Human trafficking is a serious, widespread issue in Baltimore City. The National Human Trafficking Hotline reported that 138 victims, 86 traffickers, and 24 trafficking businesses were identified as being in Maryland.<sup>1</sup> As of June 2018, Maryland had seen 170 calls and 72 cases of human trafficking.<sup>2</sup> Mapping of that hotline data showed a stark concentration of calls in Baltimore City. Between July 2013 and July 2018, over 440 cases of child sex trafficking were reported, a majority of which involved Maryland residents living in Baltimore between the ages of 14 and 17.<sup>3</sup>

Studies show that traffickers often target individuals with chronic health issues; exploiting feelings of isolation or fear that often accompany significant illnesses.<sup>4</sup> Between 2015 and 2017, over 2000 potential victims reported having a pre-existing health issue, including physical disabilities, mental health needs, substance use concerns, or a developmental disability.<sup>5</sup> The connection between substance use and sex trafficking recruitment is both significant and well-studied, but new data from the National Human Trafficking Hotline suggests that substance use is a risk factor for labor trafficking as well.<sup>6</sup> Traffickers often offer victims of trafficking a supply of

<sup>1</sup> National Human Trafficking Hotline. (2017). Maryland Spotlight 2017.  
<https://humantraffickinghotline.org/sites/default/files/2017%20Maryland%20State%20Report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> National Human Trafficking Hotline. (2018, June 30). Maryland.  
<https://humantraffickinghotline.org/state/maryland>

<sup>3</sup> Council Bill – 18-0029, <https://baltimore.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3703128&GUID=68D5EC33-EECE-49D1-954A-053782F64139&Options=ID|Text|&Search=18-029>

<sup>4</sup> Anthony, B. (2018 July). On-Ramps, Intersections, and Exit Routes: A Roadmap for Systems and Industries to Prevent and Disrupt Human Trafficking. Polaris Project.  
<https://polarisproject.org/sites/default/files/A%20Roadmap%20for%20Systems%20and%20Industries%20to%20Prevent%20and%20Disrupt%20Human%20Trafficking%20-%20Health%20Care.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

drugs, settlement of previous drug debt, or fraudulent job opportunities as incentives for recruitment.<sup>7</sup>

Human trafficking hotlines play an important role in connecting victims to much-needed services and supports, as well as providing an avenue for the public to shed light on potential abuses.<sup>8</sup> For the above reasons, BCHD fully supports human trafficking hotline notices in all Baltimore City-owned and –occupied buildings and requests a **favorable** report on Council Bill #21-0038.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Between December of 2007 and December of 2019, the Polaris Project, alone, had identified 63,380 cases of human trafficking. National Human Trafficking Hotline. (n.d.). Retrieved October 19, 2020, from <https://humantraffickinghotline.org>