



January 31, 2023

Sophia Gebrehiwot, Legislative Liaison  
Council Affairs, Mayor and City Council of Baltimore  
100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

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

Dear Council President Mosby and Members of the City Council:

Please, accept this correspondence in response to a request for comment regarding [22-0139R Investigative Hearing - Human Trafficking Investigations and Prosecutions](#).

My administration is committed to expanding and improving our ability to collaborate with our law enforcement partners and to successfully prosecute Human Trafficking cases, in Baltimore City. Our overall strategy includes more robust efforts to respond to human trafficking. We are actively recruiting attorneys with experience in this subject matter; however, employing designated staff to this subject matter necessitates pursuing attorneys with experience and commitment in the very difficult area of physical and sexual exploitation of vulnerable victims. In the short-term, the Special Victims Unit will remain the primary unit for the pursuit of these prosecutions. SVU has many attorneys with significant experience in physical and sexual abuse, domestic violence/intimate partner violence, and sexual assault. While human trafficking fits within the parameters of this unit, these crimes warrant a more concerted and directed effort.

Sustaining the prosecution of human trafficking in the long-term will require adequate resources to hire additional staff to pursue more complex, multi-tiered trafficking cases, with a focus on organized criminal activity. We are still reviewing our overall strategic plan, in that regard, and would be able to implement such a plan with additional resources.

Pending receipt of the necessary resources, we currently employ a well-regarded expert in human trafficking, whose position is currently supported by VOCA funding. We will integrate him into our planning and education of staff, at all levels. It is important that we develop stronger ties to the advocacy community which can be a resource for education of our staff victims, during and after prosecution and incorporate a systematic approach to tracking the data in support of our efforts.

I look forward to working with the Mayor and City Council to address these challenges.

Sincerely,

  
Ivan J. Bates