

CITY OF BALTIMORE

STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE, Mayor

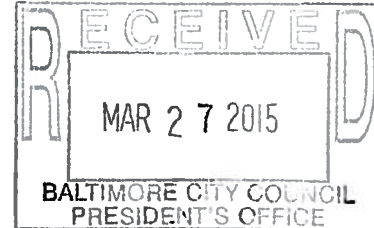


OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS AND
WAGE ENFORCEMENT
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION

LARRY ENNELS, Interim Director
231 E. Baltimore Street, 8th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

March 19, 2015

Ms. Angela Gibson
City Council Liaison
Mayor's Office of Government Relations
Room 250, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202



Re: City Council Bill 14-0464 – Hotels – Human Trafficking Prevention

Dear Councilman Kraft:

The Office of Civil Rights and Wage Enforcement has reviewed City Council Bill 14-0464 which requires the registration of all hotels in the City and prohibits hotels from renting out sleeping accommodations for a period of less than ½ day. It also requires that all hotel employees receive training on how to identify human trafficking activities and human trafficking victims, and requires hotels to certify that all employees have completed the anti- human trafficking training.

Human trafficking in Baltimore is a pressing human rights concern. The state of Maryland defines a victim of human trafficking as “an individual who has been recruited, harbored, transported, provided, or obtained for labor, services, or a sexual act through the use of force, fraud, or coercion.”¹ Maryland, and Baltimore in particular, is uniquely situated to be a “hot spot” for human trafficking due to its central location to major east coast cities and its major highways filled with rest stops, truck stops, and bus stations, all of which are used by traffickers.²

As such, the Baltimore City Mayor's Office participates in Maryland's Human Trafficking Task Force (MHTTF), an umbrella organization of local, state and federal agencies and private organizations formed in 2007 to identify and assist victims of human trafficking while investigating and prosecuting offenders.³

¹ Md. Code, State Gov. §7-301 (2014).

² “Human Trafficking in Maryland,” Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force. www.mdhumantrafficking.org/maryland.

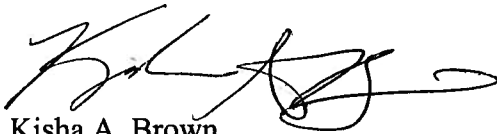
³ “Human Trafficking,” United States Attorney's Office, District of Maryland. www.justice.gov/usao-md/human-trafficking.

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The Office of Civil Rights and Wage Enforcement commends Councilman Kraft and the City Council for its efforts to address the troubling problem of human trafficking in Baltimore. Although there may be a need for clarifying language to City Council Bill 14-0464, the spirit of the bill is worthy of serious consideration. As such, the Office of Civil Rights and Wage Enforcement will continue to work with the City Council, advocates and the business community to develop an effective bill aimed at protecting and aiding some of our City's most vulnerable people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kisha A. Brown', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Kisha A. Brown
Director
Office of Civil Rights