

CITY OF BALTIMORE

CATHERINE E. PUGH, Mayor



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF HUMAN SERVICES

711 Redwood Street, 5th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

February 15, 2019

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 19-0323 Hotels – Anti-Human Trafficking Training

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Mayor's Office of Human Services ("MOHS") has reviewed City Council Bill 19-0323, entitled, Hotels – Anti-Human Trafficking Training. This legislation would require hotels to provide all hotel employees with anti-human trafficking training on an annual basis.

From a Human Services perspective, Council Bill 19-0323 represents a plan for educating hotel staff about issues related to human trafficking, its broad impact would be working to identify and reporting instances of human trafficking and the importance of linking victims to help and to supportive services. There is intersectionality with youth who experience homelessness and sex trafficking. MOHS works closely with providers and advocates to address issues related to youth homelessness and we believe this bill has the potential to provide many benefits.

Research has shown young people experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable to Exploitation and trafficking and LGBTQ youth are at particularly high risk.

- 2017 Youth REACH MD Report: A survey of unaccompanied homeless youth in Maryland found 1,690 unaccompanied homeless youth in Baltimore City. Of the youth who completed the survey question (536), 8% of unaccompanied homeless youth in Baltimore City reported exchanging sex for money/rent/etc.
- National studies on youth and human trafficking: From two recent studies, almost 1 in 5 young people experiencing homelessness experienced some form of trafficking.

HUD has emphasized the intersections of homelessness and human trafficking and has taken steps to align homeless service policy and planning to better serve victims of human trafficking. In particular examining policy development and implementation. The links below serve as a resource guide for information and awareness.

<https://www.hudexchange.info/news/from-our-federal-partners-look-beneath-the-surface-human-trafficking-awareness-campaign-materials-available/>

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/archive/otip/initiatives/federal-plan>

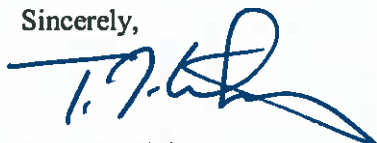
<https://www.hudexchange.info/news/snaps-in-focus-addressing-the-needs-of-human-trafficking-victims/>

MOHS believes trainings should be appropriately designed and standardized with input from experts in the field and should require the use of best practices. Additionally, people with lived experience of homelessness and sex trafficking should be involved in the policy design and implementation process to ensure its effectiveness and identify potential unintended consequences.

Lastly, consideration should be given to how this policy may inadvertently criminalize or otherwise disadvantage vulnerable populations. This policy and subsequent trainings and interventions should not lead to increased arrests or incarceration of individuals who are trafficked or engaged in sex work.

Council Bill #18-0296 provides a reasonable framework for expanding public education on human trafficking, it is likely to lead to increased reporting and help with those looking for a way out. For these reasons, the Mayor's Office of Human Services recommends a **favorable report** on City Council Bill 19-0323.

Sincerely,

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

Terry F. Hickey
Director