


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:	19-0428 – Human-Trafficking Notice Requirements - City-Owned and -Occupied Buildings FAVORABLE		

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

October 20, 2020

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Bill #19-0428, entitled, “Human-Trafficking Notice Requirements - City-Owned and -Occupied Buildings.” 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.¹ As of June 2018, Maryland had seen 170 calls and 72 cases of human trafficking.² 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 17.³

Studies show that traffickers often target individuals with chronic health issues; exploiting feelings of isolation or fear that often accompany significant illnesses.⁴ 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.⁵ 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.⁶ Traffickers often offer victims of trafficking a

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

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

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

⁴ 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>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

supply of drugs, settlement of previous drug debt, or fraudulent job opportunities as incentives for recruitment.⁷

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.⁸ 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 #19-0428.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ 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/>