



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0008R, Version: 0

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Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmembers Burnett, Cohen, Dorsey

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning

Recognizing January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month

For the purpose of recognizing January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month and recognizing the tireless and ongoing efforts of the Baltimore City Human Trafficking Collaborative in educating the citizens of Baltimore to assist in the prevention of human trafficking and supporting victims of human sex and labor trafficking.

Recitals

President Barack Obama first proclaimed January as “National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention” month in 2010. Since then, state and local governments across the country have declared January as a month to promote awareness of human trafficking in the hopes that, through increased awareness, this societal ill can be eradicated.

To be sure, human trafficking is a form of modern slavery that occurs in every state, including Maryland. The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force is the State’s primary organization that works to prevent trafficking, protect victims by providing them with the services they need, prosecute traffickers, and partner with a variety of organizations to eradicate the scourge of human trafficking from our communities.

The statistics are staggering. Worldwide, an estimated 40.3 million people are trapped into human trafficking slavery, which includes sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, organ harvesting, and forced labor work. Indeed, human trafficking is a billion-dollar industry, making \$150 billion annually from the trafficking of babies as young as 1 year old and with adults as old as 63.

Between 14,500 and 17,500 individuals are trafficked into the United States each year. Nationally, an estimated 4,457 to 20,995 youths ages 13-17 are involved in the U.S. sex industry. In Maryland, there were over 440 cases of child sex trafficking reported to local Departments of Social Services between July 2013 and July 2018. These reports involved over 375 alleged minor victims, the majority of whom were Maryland residents between the ages of 14-17 years old. In 2019, Maryland documented 187 cases of human trafficking, outpacing the prior years.

Youth who identify as LGBTQ may be additionally vulnerable to trafficking due to lack of social supports, familial rejection, or both. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 74% of the children trafficked came from the foster care or the social services system when they ran away and were lured

into sex trafficking.

The Baltimore City Human Trafficking Collaborative has become a leader in the State of Maryland with its proactive anti-trafficking efforts. In 2019, the Collaborative provided \$300,000 in grant funds to assist human trafficking services programs to better serve trafficking survivors. In 2020, there was an additional \$300,000 in grant funds allocated. Indeed, despite a global pandemic the Collaborative was able to virtually provided human trafficking awareness to over 1,000 people to include school personnel, law enforcement, and members of the Baltimore City Fire Department. The Collaborative is working hard and finding great success in arrests and assistance, and there is no better time than now to recognize their efforts.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Council recognizes January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month and recognizes the tireless and ongoing efforts of the Baltimore City Human Trafficking Collaborative in educating the citizens of Baltimore to assist in the prevention of human trafficking and supporting victims of human sex and labor trafficking.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Health Commissioner, the Housing Commissioner, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the Baltimore City Council.