

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2023 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 203

(Senator Jackson)

Judicial Proceedings

**Maryland Department of Transportation – Child Exploitation and Human
Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response**

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to develop and implement a training program, including a curriculum, on the identification and reporting of suspected child exploitation and human trafficking. MDOT must administer the training program to specified MDOT employees and employers, as defined in the bill. Each affected employer must establish a child exploitation and human trafficking reporting procedure and a prevention policy, as specified. Finally, MDOT must disseminate information and resources about child exploitation and human trafficking by developing and displaying signs and by requiring frequent public service announcements.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase significantly, likely by hundreds of thousands of dollars, in FY 2024. In future years, the bill's requirements can likely be handled with minimal additional costs. Nonbudgeted expenditures for the Maryland Transportation Authority are not anticipated to be materially affected. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: The bill does not directly affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Applicability

The bill applies to an employee who is (1) a State employee who works at a transit station, airport, port facility, or highway rest stop; (2) employed under a contract with the State, including hospitality employees, who works at a transit station, airport, port facility, or highway rest stop; (3) a State employee who provides transit service; or (4) employed under a contract with the State to provide transit service. It also applies to the employer of one of these employees.

Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Awareness Training

The training program developed by MDOT must include a video presentation that (1) defines child exploitation and human trafficking and (2) offers guidance to employees on the identification of potential victims of child exploitation and human trafficking and protocols for reporting suspected child exploitation and human trafficking.

By October 1, 2024, and each October 1 thereafter, each employer must certify to MDOT that their employees have completed the training program. New employees must complete the training within 90 days after their hire dates.

Reporting Procedures and Prevention Policies Related to Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking

Each employer, in consultation with MDOT, must (1) establish a procedure for reporting suspected incidents of child exploitation or human trafficking to appropriate security staff, law enforcement, or the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline and (2) implement a child exploitation and human trafficking prevention policy for employees by providing information on how to recognize potential victims, respond to an individual who may be or is a victim, and connect an individual who may be or is a victim with available resources.

An employer or employee may not be held civilly or criminally liable for reporting or responding in good faith to a suspected incident of child exploitation or human trafficking.

Dissemination of Information and Resources

MDOT must develop a sign displaying information and resources for child exploitation and human trafficking victims and require the sign to be displayed at transit stations, airports, port facilities, and highway rest stops.

MDOT must require frequent public service announcements with safety information for child exploitation and human trafficking victims to be made, in both English and Spanish, at transit stations, airports, port facilities, and highway rest stops.

Current Law: Numerous government entities and licensed businesses in the State are required to provide, approve, and/or receive training on the identification and reporting of human trafficking. For example:

- the Maryland State Department of Education is required to collaborate with the Maryland Department of Health to provide awareness and training for Directors of Student Services in local education agencies on human trafficking, including strategies for the prevention of trafficking of children;
- a commercial driver's license training school is required to include, as part of its curriculum, education and training on the recognition, prevention, and effective reporting of human trafficking; and
- each innkeeper must provide a new employee with an annual training for the accurate and prompt identification and reporting of suspected human trafficking (any such training program must be approved by the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services and the Maryland Department of Labor).

State Expenditures: The bill (1) may increase MDOT's workload and/or costs to develop and implement the required training program and (2) directly increases MDOT's costs to post the required signs at its transit stations, airports, port facilities, and highway rest stops. The development and implementation of the reporting procedure, the prevention policy, and public service announcements can likely be handled using existing resources.

Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Awareness Training

To develop the required training, MDOT has two options: (1) to hire a consultant; or (2) to create an in-house training. Hiring a consultant could be expensive, particularly if the consultant charges MDOT on a per-employee basis. Alternatively, MDOT anticipates being able to develop a training in-house using existing resources. Thus, for purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that MDOT develops the training in-house at no additional cost. To implement the program, training for *new* employees/employers can be added to existing trainings and orientations at no additional cost; however, TTF expenditures may increase in fiscal 2024 as a result of additional overtime needed to conduct the training for hundreds,

if not thousands, of *existing* employees and contractors. Since there is no explicit timeframe by which the training must be completed, and only a requirement that employers certify to MDOT that the training has been completed by October 1, 2024, MDOT may be able to conduct the training for existing employees/contractors on a staggered basis to avoid or reduce overtime costs.

Signage

TTF expenditures increase significantly, likely by hundreds of thousands of dollars in fiscal 2024, to post signs at MDOT's transit stations, airports, port facilities, and highway rest stops. The bulk of the cost is anticipated for the Maryland Transit Administration, which has more than 4,000 bus stops, 33 light rail stops (most of which lack any place to display signs), and 14 metro stations; however, the Maryland Aviation Administration and Maryland Port Authority may experience thousands of dollars in new costs as well, depending on how many signs are placed at the ports and airports. *For illustrative purposes only*, at an estimated cost of \$100 to develop and post each sign, placing a single sign at each bus stop alone would cost \$400,000. In future fiscal years, signage costs are likely minimal and absorbable, as MDOT only needs to replace signs as needed.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation; University System of Maryland; Department of State Police; Harford and Wicomico counties; City of College Park; Baltimore City Community College; Department of Legislative Services

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