



# THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**BILL:** House Bill 459– Criminal Law - Victims of Human Trafficking - Affirmative Defense

**SPONSOR:** Delegate Cain, *et al.*

**HEARING DATE:** February 11, 2020

**COMMITTEE:** Judiciary

**CONTACT:** Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

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**POSITION:** SUPPORT

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The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 459**, which establishes an affirmative defense in a prosecution for a specified list of offenses if the defendant committed an act as a result of being a victim of an act of another in violation of the State's prohibitions on sex trafficking and forced marriage or federal human trafficking laws. The bill repeals provisions relating to existing affirmative defenses available in prosecutions for prostitution-related offenses.

The Prince George's County Human Relations Commission as the chair of the Prince George's County Human Trafficking Task Force (PGCHTTF) supports **House Bill 459**. The purpose of the PGCHTTF is to educate Prince George's County residents about human trafficking, identify and serve victims of human trafficking, and to increase prosecution rates of traffickers. This Bill will assist victims of human trafficking by providing protections to victims as survivors.

**House Bill 459** is hugely impactful for human trafficking victims who are often forced to engage in other criminal activities as a result of their human trafficking victimization. By establishing an affirmative defense, this bill initiates the discussion of criminal protections for victims of human trafficking.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 459** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.