



BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 876

TITLE: Business Regulation – Innkeepers – Records and Human Trafficking Awareness Training

COMMITTEE: Finance

HEARING DATE: February 18, 2021

POSITION: Support

The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force (MDHTTF) and its members respectfully request a favorable report for Senate Bill 876, as it will make a significant impact on the ability to combat human trafficking across the state.

Senate Bill 876 requires an innkeeper to maintain computerized records of guest transactions and receipts for at least six months, and requires the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services and the Department of Labor to approve educational training materials and programs related to the identification and reporting of suspected human trafficking. Further, all employees at lodging establishments in Maryland will be required to receive the above-mentioned training annually.

MDHTTF supports efforts to dismantle human trafficking by strengthening laws prosecuting traffickers, providing services and rehabilitation to victims, and increasing awareness of the issue. Human trafficking is so insidious that it often occurs where we might not expect it – such as our own communities – and can be found in every corner of the state. Increased awareness and participation from the public is crucial to help end this practice. In fact, the largest number of calls coming from Maryland to the National Human Trafficking Hotline in 2019 were from those observing or suspecting trafficking¹. Senate Bill 876 takes a very important step towards this goal by involving professionals who are not only members of our communities but also working in an industry with a large number of travelers and transient occupants. Lodging employees are uniquely poised to help in this effort.

About MDHTTF: Formed in 2007 by the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the Attorney General of Maryland, and the State’s Attorney for Baltimore City, MDHTTF serves as the lead investigative, prosecutorial, and victim services coordinating body for anti-human trafficking activity in the State of Maryland. MDHTTF has grown to include most law enforcement agencies in the State, all child-serving state agencies, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, Homeland Security Investigations, most local State’s Attorney’s Offices, and dozens of victim service agencies. MDHTTF is comprised of five committees – legislative, law enforcement, victim services, public awareness, and training. During this time, MDHTTF has grown a robust understanding of the issue of human trafficking in Maryland.

¹ <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/state/maryland>. Out of 187 requests for cases, 133 were to “Report a Trafficking Tip.” Of the 533 contacts to the Human Trafficking Hotline, 118 were from a “Community Member,” second only to victims of trafficking. 2019 is the most recent year data is available.