

Testimony Concerning H.B 165 Education – Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program – Human and Sex Trafficking Submitted to Senate Education, Health and Environment Affairs

March 23, 2022

Position: Support

---

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of Bill HB 165 - Education – Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness and Prevention Program – Human and Sex Trafficking that requires the State of Board of Education and nonpublic schools that hold a certificate of approval from the State Board and participate in the Nonpublic Schools Textbook and Technology Grants Program to develop and implement a program of age-appropriate education on the awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and assault that includes, for students in grades 6 through 8, material promoting the awareness and prevention of human and sex trafficking. As a woman and community member, this bill is important to me because recently I had a cousin who was approached by a male walking home from school. She had no idea how to deal with this issue and did not know much about human and sex trafficking. It is critical that we educate our youth about human trafficking and prosecute and eradicate the scourge of human trafficking in our communities throughout Maryland. Education and prevention are the keys, and we have to look beyond the surface to ensure age-appropriate content is being taught in our schools about the basic forms of human trafficking as fraudulently, forcibly, or coercively using another for the purpose of exploitation.

For these reasons, I urge a favorably report on HB 165.

Respectfully submitted, Tonia Ferguson, tonia1913@hotmail.com,