



**BILL NUMBER:** Senate Bill 53

**TITLE:** Juvenile Law - Juvenile Interrogation Protection Act

**COMMITTEE:** Judicial Proceedings

**HEARING DATE:** January 27, 2022

**POSITION:** FAVORABLE

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The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force (MDHTTF) and its members respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 53.

Senate Bill 53 prohibits the police from interrogating a child prior to the child consulting with an attorney. In Maryland, child victims of sex trafficking are still subject to prosecution for acts related to their victimization. Children can be arrested and charged with prostitution and a myriad of other offense that they may have been forced to commit by their trafficker and therefore could find themselves subject to police interrogation

The ability to consult with an attorney prior to interrogation is critical to a young person's ability to understand their Miranda rights. "Even intelligent children and teenagers often do not fully understand their Miranda rights, which can require a tenth-grade level of understanding."<sup>1</sup> Young people do not understand or appreciate the long-term consequences of their actions, can be impulsive, and their brains are not fully developed.

The MDHTTF believes that the protections created in SB 53 will ensure that children subject to police interrogation sufficiently appreciate their Constitutional rights and urges a favorable report.

For more information, please contact Amanda Rodriguez at [arodriguez@turnaroundinc.org](mailto:arodriguez@turnaroundinc.org) or Melanie Shapiro at [mshapiro@mnadv.org](mailto:mshapiro@mnadv.org), co-chairs of the Legislative Committee of the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/all/pr/ReducingRisksAnExecutiveGuidetoEffectiveJuvenileInterviewandInterrogation.pdf>

**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.

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