



www.marylandwomen.org

Maryland Commission for Women

A Commission of the Maryland Department of Human Services

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January 31, 2024

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The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
The Honorable Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Judicial Proceeding Committee
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB 153 – Maryland Department of Transportation – Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response

Dear Senators Smith and Waldstreicher and Members of the Judicial Proceeding Committee:

The Maryland Commission for Women writes to you with respect to SB 153 – Maryland Department of Transportation – Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Awareness, Training, and Response. Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking is an issue with which the Maryland Commission for Women (“MCW”) has long been concerned.

As you may know, the MCW was established in 1965 and was set in state law in 1971. An office of the Department of Human Services, the Commission is a 25-member advisory board whose duties outlined in its enabling legislation include: study the status of women in our state, recommend methods of overcoming discrimination, recognize women’s accomplishments and contributions, and provide informed advice to the executive and legislative branches of government on the issues concerning the women of our state. It is to fulfill this mandate that the Commission writes to you today.

Let us explain why this legislation is important: According to the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services: “Human trafficking is a horrible crime that continues to occur in Maryland and affects all parts of the State. Three major airports, inexpensive bus transportation, train service along the east coast, large sporting events and disposable income makes Maryland an attractive destination for traffickers.”

Although efforts have been made in the recent past to address certain issues relating to human trafficking, the MCW believes that more can and should be done where young people – and particularly children under the age of 18 – are victims. The Act would amend Maryland’s existing transportation laws in three critical ways:

- Help prevent child victims from further victimization by requiring mandatory training for transportation operators in order to improve the identification and reporting of suspected child exploitation and human trafficking.

- Development of procedures for reporting suspected child exploitation and human trafficking by transportation operators and implementation of a prevention policy.
- Providing a pathway to prevent any criminal or delinquent liability for reporting or responding to a suspected incident of child exploitation or human trafficking.

We ask that Maryland be a voice of leadership on this important issue.

The Maryland Commission for Women requests your support for the passage of this important legislation.

With very best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tawanda A. Bailey'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Tawanda A. Bailey, Chair
Maryland Commission for Women

(The positions expressed in this letter are those of the Commission for Women and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Governor or the Department of Human Services.)