

Safe Harbor Workgroup Meeting Minute

June 8, 2017

Members in attendance: Secretary John Wobensmith, Chairman, Secretary of State's Office, Senator Susan Lee, Member of the Maryland Senate, Delegate Marice Morales, Member of the Maryland House of Representatives, Doug Mohler, Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, Christi Megna, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Lt. Matthew Kail, Maryland State Police, Melanie Sharpiro, Office of the Public Defender - Juvenile Division, Thomas Stack, Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, Det. David Blackburn, Law Enforcement Representative - Baltimore County Police Department, Amanda Rodriguez, Turnaround Inc., Amelia Rubenstein, Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force, Cpl. Chris Heid, Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force – Maryland State Police, Christine Raino, Shared Hope International

Other guests in attendance: Sarah Smalt, Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program, Emma Craig, Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program, Jessica Binstock, Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program, Eileen King, Child Justice Center, Anne Hoyer, Director of Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program, Michael Lore, Chief of Staff for Senator Susan Lee, Nathaniel Erb, Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force, Lourdes Padilla, Secretary of the Department for Human Resources, Sam Abed, Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Services, Ed Clark, Executive Director for the Maryland Center for School Safety, Glenn Fueston, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, Phylicia Henry, Courtney's House, Sara Kominers, Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Candy Edwards, Governor's Office for Children, Diane Banchiere, Maryland Department of Human Resources

I. Welcome

Secretary Wobensmith called the meeting to order at 1:08 pm. He welcomed everyone to the 2017 Safe Harbor Workgroup and thanked Senator Lee and Delegate Morales for sponsoring the bill that extended the sunset of the workgroup until June 30, 2019.

Despite undertaking efforts to confront human trafficking, Maryland remains a popular destination for human trafficking because of its location on the East Coast, the nearby airports, bus stops, Amtrak and hotels, and the popularity of sporting events in the area.

Secretary Wobensmith acknowledged Governor Hogan for continuing to be a strong partner. Governor Hogan last year introduced SB 308 and HB 632, "Protecting Victims of Sex Trafficking Act of 2017," which was unanimously passed and signed into law on April 18, 2017.

II. Short Introductions

Every member had the opportunity to introduce themselves to the attendees.

III. Review of the 2016 Final Safe Harbor Report

Thomas Stack read through all of the ten recommendations that were in the 2016 Safe Harbor Final Report.

IV. Review of Last Year's Legislation

Michael Lore reviewed all of the legislation that was introduced in the 2017 session that was related to the Safe Harbor Workgroup.

- **SB 1018 and HB 1202** – “Human Trafficking Victims – Establishment of Workgroups”
The bill to establish a workgroup to study a single point of entry for services and criminal immunity for victims of human trafficking died unexpectedly as it received an unfavorable report from judicial proceedings.
However, **SB 1017**, “The Workgroup to Study Safe Harbor Policy for Youth Victims of Human Trafficking – Sunset Extension,” was passed to allow for a continuation of the current workgroup.
- **SB 308 and HB 632** – “Child Abuse – Sex Trafficking (Protecting Victims of Sex Trafficking Act of 2017)”
The administrative bill passed and was required in order to receive federal funding. The bill altered the definition of child abuse to include the sex trafficking of a child by those without legal custody of the child. This bill, sponsored by Senator Lee, was passed and signed into law by Governor Hogan.
- **SB 220 and HB 1279** – “Police Training Commission – Training Requirements – Human Trafficking”
This bill requires the Police Training Commission to provide the training of criminal laws related to human trafficking. Sponsored by Senator Lee and Delegate Morales, this bill was passed and signed into law by Governor Hogan.
- **SB 221 and HB 258** – “Adult Entertainment Establishment – National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline Information – Sign Posting Requirements”
This bill was sponsored by Senator Lee and Delegate Morales. This bill requires owners of adult entertainment facilities to post the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline number in their bathrooms. This bill was passed and signed into law by Governor Hogan. It was recommended by the Workgroup that there be more education on human trafficking at the committee level.
- **SB 271** – “Criminal Law – Prostitution and Assignment – Penalties”
Sponsored by Senator Lee, this bill would recodify the crime of solicitation of prostitution. It received an unfavorable review and was withdrawn.

There were no questions on the legislative agenda.

Senator Lee commented on this past year's legislative session, noting that Delegate Morales and herself were able to pass a number of bills in the General Assembly, but that there is still ignorance and a lack of understanding about the impact of human trafficking. She thanked Secretary Wobensmith for his leadership of the taskforce and encouraged the members to keep working on the bills that did not pass the last session.

V. **Public Forum**

A Member of the Audience

On behalf of Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk, she inquired as to whether someone in the workgroup was versed in the straight language and social media tactics used in grooming and trafficking children. Many members of the workgroup responded saying the agencies where they work are aware of the language and tactics used in trafficking.

Katharina Acosta

She informed the workgroup and guests of the work that Catholic Charities of Washington is doing to educate parishioners and the public on human trafficking and offered to provide the workgroup with her contact information.

A Public Health Nurse Representing Frederick County

She reported a willingness to work with the taskforce on any issues related to public health and also a willingness to learn from them.

VI. **Recommendations Discussion**

Members of the taskforce discussed the bipartisan pressure that Congress is putting on states to enact policies to confront human trafficking, including legislative requirements in order to receive federal funding, like the need for SB 308, which altered the definition of child sexual abuse. They agreed that Maryland should take action without first being pressured to do so by the federal government.

Delegate Morales inquired as to whether it would be worthwhile to reevaluate the data on human trafficking in Maryland. Amelia Rubenstein said she could go over the numbers at the next meeting.

Senator Lee emphasized the need to focus on immunization for victims and the identification of federal funding, especially for law enforcement agencies and social services.

Members discussed the correlation between drugs/drug trafficking and human trafficking, as well as between domestic violence in the home and future human trafficking.

Amelia Rubenstein talked about a three-year project that will develop full training for law enforcement, judges, and legal professionals to educate them about human trafficking through e-modules and in-person trainings.

Amanda Rodriguez emphasized that a single point of entry policy for victims of human trafficking needs to allow for those at risk for being trafficked and their families as well as those who have been victims.

Members discussed the role of judges in dealing with human trafficking. Judge Waxman advised that they have already begun judicial training and have scheduled the 2018 judicial training regarding human trafficking. The courts also provide information to judges on how to identify trafficking and what they can and cannot do when they suspect trafficking in a case.

Members agreed that identifying funding is important to allow service providers the ability to continue their work without fear of losing funding. Anne Hoyer commented on the need to fund existing entities, such as Social Services and Child Protective Services, as they are often the first to interact with at-risk children but are over-worked, under-educated, under-paid, and often do not recognize the signs of abuse and/or trafficking. The workgroup discussed the need for evidence-based practices and measuring the impact as it has significant impact on funding and sustainability.

The workgroup stated that they need to define what services they are talking about for single point of entry. They talked about looking at other states' strategies, as well as what would satisfy cost-benefit analysis. Amanda Rodriguez mentioned looking into Minnesota's approach. Some states have established regional navigators to become the single point coordination of services for victims. Amanda Rodriguez mentioned the possibility for NGOs and rape crisis center to adapt to provide services for trafficking victims as well.

Representatives from Turnaround, Inc. and Courtney's House talked about the services offered at their organizations for victims of human trafficking to help clarify what services the workgroup may want to consider for victims.

VII. Conclusion

Secretary Wobensmith told the workgroup to come to the next meeting prepared to continue the discussion on the recommendations discussed during current meeting and to discuss the recommendations that had not yet been mentioned. The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 pm.