



BILL NO: House Bill 258
TITLE: Adult Entertainment Establishments – National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline Information – Sign Posting Requirements
COMMITTEE: Economic Matters
HEARING DATE: February 7, 2017
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Amara Legal Center strongly supports the passage of House Bill 258. The Amara Legal Center is a nonprofit legal services organization that provides free legal services to survivors of sex trafficking in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. House Bill 258 would require the owners of “adult entertainment establishments” to post a National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline information sign, provided by the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, in each restroom of such establishments. The Amara Legal Center supports this bill because employees of adult entertainment establishments are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking.

Raising awareness of human trafficking must be a key component of any effort to combat human trafficking. Victims of human trafficking are often among the most vulnerable members of society and without targeted outreach they are unlikely to learn about the reporting mechanisms and support services available to them. Additionally, victims of trafficking are unlikely to self-identify. Therefore, it is important to educate people they may come into contact with about the signs of human trafficking and know how to report it.

Many of Amara’s clients were first victimized at adult entertainment establishments and/or began trafficking while employed at one. Current Maryland law requires that National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline signs be placed in truck stops and bus stations, common venues for perpetrators of human trafficking. Requiring adult entertainment establishments to do the same will increase the state of Maryland’s ability to raise awareness of human trafficking and provide information on resources available to victims to a population highly at risk of being victimized by the crime.

National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline signs are an effective tool for raising awareness of human trafficking and requiring their placement in adult entertainment establishments will provide crucial information to individuals particularly at risk of being victims of human trafficking. For these reasons, the Amara Legal Center supports HB 258. We respectfully urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacie Reimer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Stacie Reimer
Executive Director
Amara Legal Center