

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 215 (Senator Forehand, *et al.*)
Judicial Proceedings

Criminal Law - Human Trafficking - Victims Under Age 21

This bill establishes that the current statutory prohibition and penalties for human trafficking of a minor apply to a victim who is younger than 21 years old.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential minimal increase in general fund revenues and expenditures due to the bill's expanded application of current monetary and incarceration penalties.

Local Effect: Potential minimal increase in local revenues from fines imposed in circuit court cases due to the bill's expanded application of current statutory penalties. Expenditures are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Criminal Law Article defines a "minor" as an individual younger than 18 years old.

Under the human trafficking prohibition, a person may not knowingly:

- take or cause another to be taken to any place for prostitution;
- place, cause to be placed, or harbor another in any place for prostitution;
- persuade, induce, or entice, or encourage another to be taken to or placed in any place for prostitution;

- receive consideration to procure for or place in a house of prostitution or elsewhere another with the intent of causing the other to engage in prostitution or assignation;
- engage in a device, scheme, or continuing course of conduct intended to cause another to believe that if the other did not take part in a sexually explicit performance, the other or a third person would suffer physical restraint or serious harm; or
- destroy, conceal, remove, confiscate, or possess an actual or purported passport, immigration document, or government identification document of another while otherwise violating or attempting to commit these acts.

A person who commits human trafficking involving an adult victim is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to maximum penalties of 10 years imprisonment and/or a fine of \$5,000. The misdemeanor offense of human trafficking is subject to prosecution at any time. The violator is subject to confinement in the penitentiary and may reserve a point or question for *in banc* review as provided by the Maryland Constitution.

A person who commits human trafficking involving a victim who is a minor is guilty of a felony and subject to maximum penalties of 25 years imprisonment and/or a fine of \$15,000.

A person who knowingly aids, abets, or conspires in the violation of human trafficking laws or knowingly benefits financially from ventures or activities in violation of State human trafficking laws is subject to the same penalties imposed on a person who violated the applicable statute.

The District Court has concurrent jurisdiction with the circuit courts over the crime of felony human trafficking.

Background: According to the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy (MSCCSP), eight people were convicted of human trafficking in the State's circuit courts from fiscal 2001 through 2011. Three of these individuals were convicted in fiscal 2011. MSCCSP also advises that there have been no convictions in the State's circuit courts for human trafficking of a minor between when the offense was created by the General Assembly in 2007 and February 2012.

According to the Judiciary, there were two cases in the District Court involving human trafficking of a minor in fiscal 2011.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1188 (Delegate Valderrama) - Judiciary.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of State Police, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy, Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Amy A. Devadas

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510