

# HOUSE BILL 508

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CF SB 550

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By: ~~Delegate Embry~~ Delegates Embry, Crutchfield, Cardin, Pasteur, Toles, Phillips, Arian, Taylor, Simpson, Grammer, Conaway, Kaufman, and Williams

Introduced and read first time: January 24, 2024  
Assigned to: Judiciary

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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments  
House action: Adopted  
Read second time: March 7, 2024

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## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Children – Labor Trafficking**

3 FOR the purpose of ~~adding labor trafficking by a child’s parent or guardian to the list of~~  
4 ~~conditions under which a local department of social services is authorized to ask the~~  
5 ~~juvenile court in a child in need of assistance proceeding to find that reasonable~~  
6 ~~efforts to reunify a child with the child’s parent or guardian are not required~~ altering  
7 the definition of “abuse” to include labor trafficking of a child by any individual for  
8 purposes of provisions of law governing children in need of assistance cases and child  
9 abuse and neglect reporting; expanding provisions of law relating to the Safe Harbor  
10 Regional Navigator Grant Program to apply to child victims of labor trafficking; and  
11 generally relating to labor trafficking of children.

12 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
13 Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings  
14 Section 3–801 ~~and 3–812~~  
15 Annotated Code of Maryland  
16 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

17 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
18 Article – Family Law  
19 Section 5–701(a) and 5–704.4(c)  
20 Annotated Code of Maryland  
21 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

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### EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
 2 Article – Family Law  
 3 Section ~~5–701(m)~~ 5–701(b) and (m), 5–704.3, and 5–704.4(b), (d), (e), and (g)  
 4 Annotated Code of Maryland  
 5 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

6 BY adding to  
 7 Article – Family Law  
 8 Section 5–701(m)  
 9 Annotated Code of Maryland  
 10 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

11 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
 12 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

13 **Article – Courts and Judicial Proceedings**

14 3–801.

15 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

16 (b) “Abuse” means:

17 (1) Sexual abuse of a child, whether a physical injury is sustained or not;  
 18 ~~or~~

19 (2) Physical or mental injury of a child under circumstances that indicate  
 20 that the child’s health or welfare is harmed or is at substantial risk of being harmed by:

21 (i) A parent or other individual who has permanent or temporary  
 22 care or custody or responsibility for supervision of the child; or

23 (ii) A household or family member; **OR**

24 **(3) LABOR TRAFFICKING OF A CHILD BY ANY INDIVIDUAL.**

25 (c) “Adjudicatory hearing” means a hearing under this subtitle to determine  
 26 whether the allegations in the petition, other than the allegation that the child requires the  
 27 court’s intervention, are true.

28 (d) “Adult” means an individual who is at least 18 years old.

29 (e) “Child” means an individual under the age of 18 years.

30 (f) “Child in need of assistance” means a child who requires court intervention  
 31 because:

1 (1) The child has been abused, has been neglected, has a developmental  
2 disability, or has a mental disorder; and

3 (2) The child's parents, guardian, or custodian are unable or unwilling to  
4 give proper care and attention to the child and the child's needs.

5 (g) "CINA" means a child in need of assistance.

6 (h) "Commit" means to transfer custody.

7 (i) "Court" means the circuit court for a county sitting as the juvenile court.

8 (j) "Custodian" means a person or governmental agency to whom custody of a  
9 child has been given by order of court, including a court other than the juvenile court.

10 (k) "Custody" means the right and obligation, unless otherwise determined by the  
11 court, to provide ordinary care for a child and determine placement.

12 (l) "Developmental disability" means a severe chronic disability of an individual  
13 that:

14 (1) Is attributable to a physical or mental impairment, other than the sole  
15 diagnosis of mental illness, or to a combination of mental and physical impairments;

16 (2) Is likely to continue indefinitely;

17 (3) Results in an inability to live independently without external support  
18 or continuing and regular assistance; and

19 (4) Reflects the need for a combination and sequence of special,  
20 interdisciplinary, or generic care, treatment, or other services that are individually planned  
21 and coordinated for the individual.

22 (m) "Disposition hearing" means a hearing under this subtitle to determine:

23 (1) Whether a child is in need of assistance; and

24 (2) If so, the nature of the court's intervention to protect the child's health,  
25 safety, and well-being.

26 (n) "Guardian" means a person to whom guardianship of a child has been given  
27 by order of court, including a court other than the juvenile court.

28 (o) "Guardianship" means an award by a court, including a court other than the  
29 juvenile court, of the authority to make ordinary and emergency decisions as to the child's  
30 care, welfare, education, physical and mental health, and the right to pursue support.

1 (p) **“LABOR TRAFFICKING” MEANS KNOWINGLY:**

2 (1) **TAKING, PLACING, HARBORING, PERSUADING, INDUCING, OR**  
3 **ENTICING A CHILD BY FORCE, FRAUD, OR COERCION TO PROVIDE SERVICES OR**  
4 **LABOR; OR**

5 (2) **RECEIVING A BENEFIT OR THING OF VALUE FROM THE PROVISION**  
6 **OF SERVICES OR LABOR BY A CHILD THAT WAS INDUCED BY FORCE, FRAUD, OR**  
7 **COERCION.**

8 (Q) “Local department” means:

9 (1) The local department of social services for the county in which the court  
10 is located; or

11 (2) In Montgomery County, the county department of health and human  
12 services.

13 [(q)] (R) (1) “Mental disorder” means a behavioral or emotional illness that  
14 results from a psychiatric or neurological disorder.

15 (2) “Mental disorder” includes a mental illness that so substantially  
16 impairs the mental or emotional functioning of an individual as to make care or treatment  
17 necessary or advisable for the welfare of the individual or for the safety of the person or  
18 property of another.

19 (3) “Mental disorder” does not include mental retardation.

20 [(r)] (S) “Mental injury” means the observable, identifiable, and substantial  
21 impairment of a child’s mental or psychological ability to function.

22 [(s)] (T) (1) “Neglect” means the leaving of a child unattended or other failure  
23 to give proper care and attention to a child by any parent or individual who has permanent  
24 or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of the child under  
25 circumstances that indicate:

26 (i) That the child’s health or welfare is harmed or placed at  
27 substantial risk of harm; or

28 (ii) That the child has suffered mental injury or been placed at  
29 substantial risk of mental injury.

30 (2) “Neglect” does not include the use of cannabis by any parent or  
31 individual who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for  
32 supervision of the child unless, as a result of the use of cannabis:

1 (i) The child's health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial  
2 risk of harm; or

3 (ii) The child has suffered mental injury or been placed at  
4 substantial risk of mental injury.

5 **[(t)] (U)** "Parent" means a natural or adoptive parent whose parental rights  
6 have not been terminated.

7 **[(u)] (v)** (1) "Party" means:

8 (i) A child who is the subject of a petition;

9 (ii) The child's parent, guardian, or custodian;

10 (iii) The petitioner; or

11 (iv) An adult who is charged under § 3-828 of this subtitle.

12 (2) "Party" does not include a foster parent.

13 **[(v)] (W)** "Qualified residential treatment program" means a program within a  
14 licensed child care institution that provides continuous, 24-hour care and supportive  
15 services to children in a residential, nonfamily home setting that:

16 (1) Has a trauma-informed treatment model that is designed to address  
17 the clinical and other needs of children with serious emotional or behavioral disorders or  
18 disturbances;

19 (2) Is able to implement the specific treatment recommended in an  
20 assessment completed by a qualified individual;

21 (3) Has registered or licensed nursing staff and other licensed clinical staff  
22 who are:

23 (i) On site according to the treatment model and during business  
24 hours; and

25 (ii) Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;

26 (4) Appropriately facilitates outreach to family members and integrates  
27 the family members into the treatment of the children;

28 (5) Is able to provide discharge planning that provides family-based  
29 aftercare support for at least 6 months following discharge;

1 (6) Is licensed in accordance with § 471(a)(10) of the Social Security Act;  
2 and

3 (7) Is accredited by an approved independent nonprofit organization.

4 **[(w)] (X)** “Reasonable efforts” means efforts that are reasonably likely to achieve  
5 the objectives set forth in § 3–816.1(b)(1) and (2) of this subtitle.

6 **[(x)] (Y)** “Relative” means an individual who is:

7 (1) Related to the child by blood or marriage within five degrees of  
8 consanguinity or affinity under the civil law; and

9 (2) (i) At least 21 years old; or

10 (ii) 1. At least 18 years old; and

11 2. Lives with a spouse who is at least 21 years old.

12 **[(y)] (Z)** “Sex trafficking” means the recruitment, harboring, transportation,  
13 provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a child for the purpose of a commercial sex  
14 act.

15 **[(z)] (AA)** “Sexual abuse” means an act that involves:

16 (1) Sexual molestation or exploitation of a child by:

17 (i) A parent or other individual who has permanent or temporary  
18 care or custody or responsibility for supervision of the child; or

19 (ii) A household or family member; or

20 (2) Sex trafficking of a child by any individual.

21 **[(aa)] (BB)** “Sexual molestation or exploitation” includes:

22 (1) Allowing or encouraging a child to engage in:

23 (i) Obscene photography, films, poses, or similar activity;

24 (ii) Pornographic photography, films, poses, or similar activity; or

25 (iii) Prostitution;

26 (2) Incest;

27 (3) Rape;

1 (4) Sexual offense in any degree; and

2 (5) Any other sexual conduct that is a crime.

3 [(bb)] (CC) "Shelter care" means a temporary placement of a child outside of the  
4 home at any time before disposition.

5 [(cc)] (DD) "Shelter care hearing" means a hearing held before disposition to  
6 determine whether the temporary placement of the child outside of the home is warranted.

7 [(dd)] (EE) "TPR proceeding" means a proceeding to terminate parental rights.

8 [(ee)] (FF) "Voluntary placement" means a placement in accordance with §  
9 5-525(b)(1)(i) or (iii) or (3) of the Family Law Article.

10 [(ff)] (GG) "Voluntary placement hearing" means a hearing to obtain a judicial  
11 determination as to whether continuing a voluntary placement is in the best interests of  
12 the child.

13 ~~§ 812.~~

14 ~~(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated, unless~~  
15 ~~the context of their use indicates otherwise.~~

16 ~~(2) "Abandon" means to leave a child without any provision for support and~~  
17 ~~without any person who has accepted long term responsibility to maintain care and have~~  
18 ~~custody and control of the child when:~~

19 ~~(i) The whereabouts of the parent or guardian are unknown; and~~

20 ~~(ii) The local department has made reasonable efforts to locate the~~  
21 ~~parent or guardian over a period of at least 6 months and has been unsuccessful.~~

22 ~~(3) "Crime of violence":~~

23 ~~(i) Has the meaning stated in § 14-101 of the Criminal Law Article;~~  
24 ~~or~~

25 ~~(ii) As to a crime committed in another state, means a crime that, if~~  
26 ~~committed in this State, would be a crime of violence as defined in § 14-101 of the Criminal~~  
27 ~~Law Article.~~

28 ~~(4) "Torture" means to cause intense pain to body or mind for purposes of~~  
29 ~~punishment or extraction of information or for sadistic purposes.~~

~~(b) In a petition under this subtitle, a local department may ask the court to find that reasonable efforts to reunify a child with the child's parent or guardian are not required if the local department concludes that a parent or guardian:~~

~~(1) Has subjected the child to any of the following aggravated circumstances:~~

~~(i) The parent or guardian has engaged in or facilitated:~~

~~1. Chronic or severe physical abuse of the child, a sibling of the child, or another child in the household;~~

~~2. Chronic and life-threatening neglect of the child, a sibling of the child, or another child in the household;~~

~~3. Sexual abuse OR LABOR TRAFFICKING of the child, a sibling of the child, or another child in the household; or~~

~~4. Torture of the child, a sibling of the child, or another child in the household;~~

~~(ii) The parent or guardian knowingly failed to take appropriate steps to protect the child after a person in the household [inflicted]:~~

~~1. **INFLECTED** sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, life-threatening neglect, or torture on the child or another child in the household; OR~~

~~2. **ENGAGED IN OR FACILITATED LABOR TRAFFICKING OF THE CHILD;**~~

~~(iii) The child, a sibling of the child, or another child in the household has suffered severe physical abuse or death resulting from abuse by the parent or guardian or another adult in the household and all persons who could have inflicted the abuse or caused the death remain in the household; or~~

~~(iv) The parent or guardian has abandoned the child;~~

~~(2) Has been convicted, in any state or any court of the United States, of:~~

~~(i) A crime of violence against:~~

~~1. A minor offspring of the parent or guardian;~~

~~2. The child; or~~

~~3. Another parent or guardian of the child; or~~



1                                 (ii) ~~Aiding or abetting, conspiring, or soliciting to commit a crime~~  
2 ~~described in item (i) of this item; or~~

3                                 (3) ~~Has involuntarily lost parental rights of a sibling of the child.~~

4                                 (e) ~~If the local department determines after the initial petition is filed that any of~~  
5 ~~the circumstances specified in subsection (b) of this section exists, the local department~~  
6 ~~may immediately request the court to find that reasonable efforts to reunify the child with~~  
7 ~~the child's parent or guardian are not required.~~

8                                 (d) ~~If the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that any of the~~  
9 ~~circumstances specified in subsection (b) of this section exists, the court shall waive the~~  
10 ~~requirement that reasonable efforts be made to reunify the child with the child's parent or~~  
11 ~~guardian.~~

12                                 (e) ~~If the court finds that reasonable efforts are not required, the local department~~  
13 ~~shall:~~

14                                 (1) ~~Request that a permanency planning hearing be held in accordance~~  
15 ~~with § 3-823 of this subtitle within 30 days after the court makes the finding; and~~

16                                 (2) ~~Make reasonable efforts to place the child in a timely manner in~~  
17 ~~accordance with the permanency plan and complete the steps necessary to finalize the~~  
18 ~~permanent placement of the child.~~

19                                 (f) ~~If a parent consents to guardianship or adoption in accordance with § 5-320~~  
20 ~~or § 5-338 of the Family Law Article, loss of parental rights shall be considered voluntary.~~

21   **Article – Family Law**

22   5–701.

23                                 (a) Except as otherwise provided in § 5–705.1 of this subtitle, in this subtitle the  
24 following words have the meanings indicated.

25                                 (b)    (1)    “Abuse” means:

26   (i)    the physical or mental injury of a child under circumstances that  
27 indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed  
28 by:

29   1.    a parent;

30   2.    a household member or family member;

1 3. a person who has permanent or temporary care or custody  
2 of the child;

3 4. a person who has responsibility for supervision of the  
4 child; or

5 5. a person who, because of the person's position or  
6 occupation, exercises authority over the child; [or]

7 (ii) sexual abuse of a child, whether physical injuries are sustained  
8 or not; OR

9 (III) LABOR TRAFFICKING OF A CHILD BY ANY INDIVIDUAL.

10 (2) "Abuse" does not include the physical injury of a child by accidental  
11 means.

12 [(m)] (L) "Indicated" means a finding that there is credible evidence, which has  
13 not been satisfactorily refuted, that abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse did occur.

14 (M) "LABOR TRAFFICKING" MEANS KNOWINGLY:

15 (1) TAKING, PLACING, HARBORING, PERSUADING, INDUCING, OR  
16 ENTICING A CHILD BY FORCE, FRAUD, OR COERCION TO PROVIDE SERVICES OR  
17 LABOR; OR

18 (2) RECEIVING A BENEFIT OR THING OF VALUE FROM THE PROVISION  
19 OF SERVICES OR LABOR BY A CHILD THAT WAS INDUCED BY FORCE, FRAUD, OR  
20 COERCION.

21 5-704.3.

22 A local department that receives a report of suspected abuse or neglect under this  
23 subtitle involving a child who is a suspected victim of sex trafficking OR LABOR  
24 TRAFFICKING shall refer the child to any appropriate regional navigator, as defined in §  
25 5-704.4 of this subtitle, for the jurisdiction where the trafficking occurred or where the  
26 child is a resident for services.

27 5-704.4.

28 (b) (1) There is a Safe Harbor Regional Navigator Grant Program.

29 (2) The purpose of the program is to support services for youth victims of  
30 sex trafficking AND LABOR TRAFFICKING by:

1 (i) creating and sustaining projects to provide services for youth  
2 victims of sex trafficking that are victim-centered and trauma-informed;

3 (ii) facilitating and coordinating among local departments, the  
4 Department of Juvenile Services, sexual assault crisis programs, child advocacy programs,  
5 local offices of the Office of the Public Defender, and other state and local agencies  
6 responding to youth victims of sex trafficking **AND LABOR TRAFFICKING**;

7 (iii) ensuring that youth victims of sex trafficking **AND LABOR**  
8 **TRAFFICKING** have access to services described under subsection (e) of this section;

9 (iv) increasing the State's capacity to respond to youth sex trafficking  
10 **AND LABOR TRAFFICKING**; and

11 (v) training providers to appropriately identify and serve youth  
12 victims of sex trafficking **AND LABOR TRAFFICKING**.

13 (c) A grantee under the program may include:

14 (1) a child advocacy center;

15 (2) a sexual assault crisis program; or

16 (3) a qualified community-based victim services provider.

17 (d) Grants under this section shall be awarded:

18 (1) to ensure that emergency and long-term services are available for  
19 youth victims of sex trafficking **AND LABOR TRAFFICKING** in every jurisdiction in the  
20 State by January 1, 2022; and

21 (2) to provide services in one jurisdiction or in more than one similar  
22 jurisdiction in the same region.

23 (e) Services coordinated and provided by a grantee under this section shall  
24 include:

25 (1) safety planning;

26 (2) emergency response;

27 (3) basic living needs, [not] including housing;

28 (4) trauma counseling and mental health services;

29 (5) drug and alcohol abuse treatment;

- 1 (6) legal services;
- 2 (7) victim advocacy;
- 3 (8) case management; and
- 4 (9) designation of regional navigators.

5 (g) (1) Every 2 years, beginning December 1, 2019, the Executive Director  
6 shall submit an independent evaluation report with qualitative and quantitative data to  
7 the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the  
8 General Assembly regarding whether services coordinated and provided by grantees under  
9 this section are available, adequate, and successfully serving children and youth who are  
10 victims of sex trafficking **AND LABOR TRAFFICKING**.

11 (2) Beginning December 1, 2019, the Department of Human Services shall  
12 annually report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government  
13 Article, the General Assembly on:

14 (i) the number of reports of child sex trafficking **AND LABOR**  
15 **TRAFFICKING** made in the State in the preceding year;

16 (ii) the outcome or disposition of reports of child sex trafficking **AND**  
17 **LABOR TRAFFICKING** made in the State in the preceding year; and

18 (iii) the number of referrals made to regional navigators under this  
19 section in the preceding year.

20 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
21 October 1, 2024.

Approved:

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Governor.

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Speaker of the House of Delegates.

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President of the Senate.