



BILL NO: House Bill 1350

COMMITTEE: House Courts of Justice - Criminal Sub Committee

DATE: February 1, 2024

SUBMITTED BY: Joy Cover, member of Virginia Coalition Against Human Trafficking and President of Freedom 4/24

POSITION: Support

Thank you, Chairperson and Subcommittee members, for the opportunity to provide feedback on this bill, and thank you, Delegate Delaney, for serving as the patron on HB 1350 and for recognizing the importance of prosecution as it relates to protecting those impacted by human trafficking.

I represent the Virginia Coalition Against Human Trafficking (VCAHT), an alliance of service providers, attorneys, survivor-advocates, and community members on a mission towards removing barriers, preventing survivors of human trafficking from achieving a full and self-reliant life through public awareness campaigns, policy reform, and enacting survivor-centered human trafficking legislation.

VCAHT supports HB 1350 as it increases the efforts to prosecute those who have engaged in human trafficking. Attorney generals can provide vast aid to the local and federal government in the identification and awareness of human trafficking. They are in the unique position to increase local efforts to stop human trafficking before it begins. Human traffickers prey on our society's most vulnerable members; this measure will hold them accountable and aid in deterring them. Attorney generals will be able to exercise both their civil and criminal authority to take this action. We anticipate that allowing the attorney general to prosecute those participating in trafficking will reduce the crime as individuals will be less inclined to undergo the risk.

Additionally, this will allow attorney generals to work with non-governmental organizations and law enforcement officials to have enhanced investigations and constructive prosecutions. By allowing the attorney general to prosecute in Virginia, you enable victims to not only have the courage to come forward, but also have the assurance that they are fully protected by the law.

We ask for your support for HB1350. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Respectfully,

Joy Cover