

# PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

## COMMITTEE REPORT

2014 Legislative Session

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<b>Reference No.:</b>	CB-79-2014
<b>Draft No.:</b>	2
<b>Committee:</b>	PUBLIC SAFETY AND FISCAL MANAGEMENT
<b>Date:</b>	10-09-2014
<b>Action:</b>	<b>Favorable as Amended</b>

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**REPORT:** Committee Vote: **Favorable as Amended 4-0-1 (In Favor: Councilmembers Toles, Davis Harrison, and Turner – Abstain: Lehman)**

This bill requires that any person who owns or operates a hotel, rooming house, tourist home, motel or tourist cabin park within the County shall be prohibited from renting rooms by the hours. The bill is in response to the problem with human trafficking in the County.

Specifically, on October 9, 2014, during the PSFM Committee work session, the legislation was amended by adding the following provisions:

1. On page 2, lines 23 – 28 removes the prohibition on hourly rentals and provides that owner cannot furnish accommodations to any person not staying as an overnight guest.
2. On page 2, line 29 -31 and page 3, in lines 1 – 8 , provides for a corporation account exemption from the room rental limitation.
3. On page 3, lines 2 – 5, provides for a hospital stay exemption within a quarter mile from the room rental.
4. On page 3, lines 11-16, provides for penalties of \$500 for a first offense and \$1,000 for subsequent offenses or up to six (6) months in jail.
5. On page 3, lines 19-29, provides for locking, securing, seizing of premises and certain personal property and vacating and closing (padlocking) premises.

Major Jason Johnson with the Police Department spoke in support of the bill and offered language to amend the room rental limitation requirement.

Sargent David Coleman with the Police Department spoke in favor of the bill and expressed how the bill would greatly enhance the ability of the Police Department to reduce human trafficking and prostitution in the County,

Michael Lyles, Executive Director of the Human Relations Commission, spoke in favor of the bill and expressed that the bill will put the County in a good position to enforce the human trafficking laws and reduce human trafficking.

Renee Battle-Brooks, Assistant State's Attorney, spoke in favor of the bill and expressed that the bill will provide another tool in which to reduce human trafficking.

J. Matthew Neitzey, Executive Director of the Prince George's County Conference and Visitors Bureau, expressed his concern that the problem of human trafficking and prostitution exist at one or two businesses while this the bill is directed to all hotels and motels and it will have unintended consequences.

Ms. Rita Harper, representing the Hillside Civic Association of Greater Capital Heights, expressed concern that a number of families have been affected by human trafficking. She also expressed concern with the hourly rental prohibition as it may be too restrictive to traveler.

Mr. David Reel, representing the Maryland Hotel and Lodging Association, was available for questions.

The enactment of CB-79-2014 may reduce lodging establishment gross receipts and as a result reduce hotel/motel tax revenue received by the County. The reduced hotel/motel tax revenue will be minimal.