

# PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

## COMMITTEE REPORT

2024 Legislative Session

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**Reference No.:** CB-023-2024

**Draft No.:** 1

**Committee:** GOFP

**Date:** April 25, 2024

**Action:** FAV (A)

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**REPORT:** Committee Vote: Favorably 5-0 (Council Watson, Harrison, Dernoga, and Oriadha) Absent: Franklin

The Prince George's County Council's Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee convened on Thursday, April 25, 2024, to consider CB-023-2024, which is an act prohibiting county contractors from engaging in sex or labor trafficking.

As proposed, CB-23-2024 clarifies the definition of sex and labor trafficking and refines the process of filing a complaint which can now be filed by anyone if they believe a contractor or subcontractor's employees or agents do not comply with the prohibitions against human sex trafficking and human labor trafficking.

Mr. Roger Banegas of the Budget and Policy Analysis Division noted that the enactment of CB-023-2024 may have an adverse direct fiscal impact on the County to the extent that the number of complaints to be investigated necessitates additional expenditures on staffing for the Office of Human Rights, to accommodate the increased workload. It is not likely to have any indirect fiscal impact on the County.

Renee Battle Brooks, Director of the Office of Human Rights, introduced Susan Esserman, founder of the Safe Center at the University of Maryland, and Caitlyn Conroy, a procurement law expert who, along with the Office of Central Services, worked to create the legislation designed to prevent trafficking.

Susan Esserman, Director of The University of Maryland Safe Center for Human Trafficking Survivors, explained that human trafficking is as prevalent in this metropolitan area as it is in most metro areas across the country. The federal government has similar procedures, but Prince George's County would be the first local jurisdiction in the US. In the future, those seeking to do business with Prince George's County will have to be more vigilant about who they are contracting with.

Caitlyn Conroy stated this is a commitment to vulnerable members of society by leveraging existing definitions for trafficking and establishing a process for protecting

members of the community. This will be accomplished by creating a mechanism for victims to file a complaint with the Office of Human Rights and penalties through contractual remedies leveraging the county's existing robust rules.

After discussion of the legislation and technical amendments, the Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee voted favorably as amended 5-0.