

Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform

Working together for a criminal justice system that better serves our communities



To: Chair Sandy Bartlett and House Judiciary Committee
From: Phil Caroom, MAJR Executive Committee chair
Date: March 10, 2026

HB 1484 has good intentions for protection of children from sex offenders, but its proposed methods aren't practical for various reasons:

- 1) The bill's first section would prevent prosecutors from dropping any charge involving alleged sex trafficking of a child under a plea agreement for any reason. However, legislators should realize that there may be many good reasons to nol pros charges in a plea that have nothing to do with protecting victims.

For example, if one defendant faces multiple charges, the prosecutor might realize there is insufficient evidence on one of them – perhaps there was mistaken identity as to the defendant, perhaps the complaining witness has admitted to lying, perhaps the alleged minor actually was 18 years old. But, perhaps there is another charge that the defendant acknowledges was correct – for example, possession of drugs. Does State's Attorneys have to take the sex offense charge to trial, even though they realize there was mistaken identity?

- 2) The bill's second section would create a new list of places which a registered sex offender may not go, including a playground, theme park or children's museum and it would create a new criminal offense for its violation. Why not just add these items to the existing list of no-go places, currently including schools and daycare centers, in Criminal Procedure Article, sec. 11-722?
- 3) Because the bills sections 1) and 2) above are unrelated, HB 1484 may violate the "one subject" rule for bill drafting.

For all these reasons, MAJR urges an unfavorable report on HB 1484.

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Please note: Phil Caroom provides this testimony for MAJR and not for the Md. Judiciary.
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