



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

News Release

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Legislation Provides Tools to Address Human Trafficking

FREDERICK, Md. – Frederick County government agencies are working together to crack down on businesses that support criminal enterprises. County Executive Jessica Fitzwater was joined by law enforcement, code enforcement, and business leaders today to announce legislation that will make it more difficult for illegal activity to occur at massage, spa, or other bodywork establishments.

“Human trafficking happens everywhere, including in Frederick County,” Executive Fitzwater said. “We must take action now to prevent these organized criminal enterprises from taking root in our community. This legislation builds on the lessons learned by our investigators and our victim advocacy agencies over the past several months.”

Frederick County’s INTERCEPT Task Force (Inter-agency Child Exploitation and Persons Trafficking) formed in October of 2023. The task force includes representatives of the Frederick County State’s Attorney’s Office, the Frederick County Sheriff’s Office, the Frederick Police Department, as well as other local, state and federal agencies and victim advocacy partners. INTERCEPT addresses crimes such as human trafficking, child sex abuse, and the online exploitation of children.

“I want to thank the Fitzwater Administration for championing this important piece of legislation, and for their unwavering support to launch INTERCEPT,” said Joyce King, chief counsel with the Frederick County State’s Attorney’s Office and a member of the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force.

The proposed legislation tightens current zoning laws in several ways. It requires a bodyworks business to get prior zoning approval by submitting copies of all licenses and a list of current employees. Licenses and lists must be re-submitted every year. The bill also allows for periodic inspections by the County’s zoning administrator. People will not be allowed to live on site. Anyone instructing unlicensed employees will be required to maintain a higher education certificate. Finally, the bill increases the types of businesses covered by the regulations. The zoning changes do not add any additional licensing requirements or fees to existing businesses that already have zoning approval.

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