

## SUMMARY

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This bill makes it a crime to loiter with the intent to purchase commercial sex, establishes a fund to support victims of sex trafficking, ensures that the crime of purchasing a minor for sex applies in any case where the victim is under 18, and requires that those charged with prostitution under current law for receiving something of value in exchange for a sex act, be offered diversion.

## BACKGROUND

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According to the [California's Attorney General Office](#), human trafficking is among the world's fastest growing criminal enterprises, worth an estimated \$150 billion. Sex trafficking remains a scourge in communities across California, disproportionately impacting girls and women of color from impoverished neighborhoods, LGBTQ+ youth, and children from the foster care system. Lacking a stable home environment and support system increases vulnerability amongst these communities.

On streets known as "blades" or "tracks," in poor urban neighborhoods, mostly women and teens are bought by men who pull up in cars and offer money in exchange for sex acts. Often, the money goes to sex traffickers who are watching and monitoring the individuals for sale on the blade. In 2022, in response to law enforcement citing or arresting people working the "blade" based on appearance, California decriminalized loitering for prostitution via [SB 357 \(Wiener\)](#). This legislation made it more difficult for law enforcement to intervene, investigate sex trafficking cases, and penalize commercial sex purchasers, and the industry continues to flourish. Neighborhoods and small businesses have been crushed by "blade activity", and victims, including minors, have experienced increased levels of violence. Meanwhile, community based organizations dedicated to supporting victims are over worked and under resourced.

In 2024, Governor Newsom signed [SB 1414 \(Grove\)](#), increasing penalties for those purchasing minors for commercial sex. However, the new law created an added requirement that minors who are 16 and 17 must be proven victims of human trafficking. This

created a loophole for holding accountable those who purchase minors for commercial sex.

Despite California's efforts to combat this fast-growing enterprise, the state continues to be a trafficking hotspot. This bill seeks a new path for attacking human trafficking by providing law enforcement stronger tools and penalties to deter, arrest and prosecute commercial sex buyers, while providing the necessary support for victims to become thriving survivors.

## BILL DETAILS

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In an effort to reduce demand for commercial sex in California, and create stronger mechanisms to support survivors, AB 379 would do the following:

- **Funding Survivor Support:** Establishes the Survivor Support Fund, directing fines collected from offenders to community-based organizations that provide direct services and outreach to sex trafficking victims.
- **Cracking Down on Demand for Commercial Sex:** The bill makes loitering with the intent to *purchase* commercial sex a misdemeanor, punishable by a \$1,000 fine in addition any other penalties.
- **Protecting Minors:** Ensures that the crime of purchasing a minor for sex applies in any case where the victim is under the age of 18.
- **Connecting to Resources:** Those charged with prostitution under current law for receiving something of value in exchange for a sex act, must be offered diversion for first and second time offenses, rather than criminal penalties.

## SUPPORT

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Community Against Sexual Harm (Co-Sponsor)  
3Strands Global Foundation (Co-Sponsor)  
Love Never Fails (Co-Sponsor)  
South Bay Coalition to End Human Trafficking  
Senator Shannon Grove (Principal Co-Author)  
Sacramento County Sheriff Jim Cooper (Co-Sponsor)  
Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis (Co-Sponsor)

Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho (Co-Sponsor)

San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan (Co-Sponsor)

## **STAFF CONTACT**

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