

SUMMARY

This bill establishes a fund to support victims of sex trafficking, makes it a crime to loiter with the intent to *purchase* commercial sex, 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

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 and particularly [Black and Native American](#) girls and women, [LGBTQ+ youth](#), and children from the [foster care system](#). Lacking a stable home environment and support system increases vulnerability.

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 \(Wiener\)](#). Although important in addressing the criminalization of survivors, the complete repeal of a statute that also applied to purchasers and pimps, 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 added a 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 and is inconsistent with the sex

trafficking statute, which applies in any case where a minor is purchased 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 creating a fund dedicated to supporting survivors and providing law enforcement stronger tools and penalties to deter, arrest and prosecute commercial sex buyers.

BILL DETAILS

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

Survivor Organizations:

Bridge Network

City of Refuge

Community Against Sexual Harm (Co-Sponsor)

3Strands Global Foundation (Co-Sponsor)

DA:NCE Awareness: No Child Exploited

Love Never Fails (Co-Sponsor)

Rights4Girls

Survivor Leader Network of San Diego

Additional Co-Sponsors:

Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis (Co-Sponsor)
Sacramento County Sheriff Jim Cooper (Co-Sponsor)
Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho (Co-Sponsor)
San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan (Co-Sponsor)
Mayor Todd Gloria, City of San Diego (Co-Sponsor)

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Additional support:

Arcadia Peace Officers' Association
Brea Peace Officers' Association
Burbank Peace Officers' Association
California Association of School Police Chiefs
California Baptists for Biblical Values
California Catholic Conference
California Coalition of School Professionals
California Narcotic Officers' Association
California Reserve Peace Officers Association
Claremont Peace Officers Association
Concerned Women for America
Corona Peace Officers' Association
Culver City Peace Officers Association
Exodus Cry
Fullerton Peace Officers' Association
Los Angeles School Police Management Association
Los Angeles Schools Police Association
Murrieta Peace Officers' Association
Mayor Karen K. Goh, City of Bakersfield
Newport Beach Police Association
Novato Peace Officers' Association
Orange County Sheriff's Department
Palos Verdes Peace Officers' Association
Mayor Patricia Dawson, City of Riverside
Placer County Deputy Sheriffs' Association
Pillars of Hope, Incorporated
Pomona Peace Officers' Association
Riverside Peace Officers' Association
Riverside Sherriff's Association
Sacramento County Probation Association
Santa Ana Peace Officers' Association
Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians
Special Operations Fighting Kids
United Auburn
Ventura County Professional Peace Officer Association
Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation
ZOE International