



April 27, 2017

To: The Honorable Senator Richard D. Roth, Chair
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4

Honorable Members
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4

From: Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director

**RE: OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES: GRANTS TO
COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING —SUPPORT**

The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) supports the request put forth by the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST) for \$15 million in grant funding to local agencies to combat human trafficking. The proposal would ensure continuing support for specialized services for victims of modern day slavery in California.

The proposal would increase funding from the prior year by \$5 million and would include a training to first responders on human trafficking, as well technical assistance and evaluation of funded trafficking programs. The proposal also funds a first of its kind study so that California can better understand the prevalence of human trafficking and its dynamics in our state.

SB 855 (Statutes of 2014) clarified that county child welfare agencies are responsible for protecting and providing services to children who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC). SB 855 also established a CSEC Program and allows counties to opt-in to receive funding to serve child victims of commercial sexual exploitation, based on locally-developed protocols developed in partnership with juvenile courts and other county agencies. Counties have also established local multi-disciplinary teams and worked in partnership with law enforcement to implement a coordinated and multi-disciplinary response when child victims come to our attention, thereby leverage services and supports to aid in their recovery from this horrific abuse.

SB 855 funding, and funding provided through the Office of Emergency Services (OES) grants to local agencies, are critical in building the local safety net of services needed by all victims of human trafficking. This severe form of abuse has profound and lasting impacts that can only be mitigated by an intensive array of services. This includes victim advocacy, legal services, health, mental health and dental care, tattoo removal, emergency shelter care, and direct services to help the victim re-integrate back to families and society.

County child welfare agencies have also been diligently working to implement SB 1322 (Mitchell, Statutes of 2016) which made the crimes of solicitation and loitering with intent to commit prostitution misdemeanors inapplicable to children younger than 18. It also allows law enforcement to take sexually exploited children into temporary custody if leaving them unattended would pose an immediate threat to their health or safety.

CWDA strongly supports additional training for first responders. Since passage of SB 855 and SB 1322, counties have identified an increased need for training and technical assistance to mandated reporters and first responders to ensure, when they come into contact with child victims of sex trafficking, they provide the appropriate response and linkage with the local human trafficking services system.

For these reasons, CWDA supports the CAST request for \$15 million for Human Trafficking grants.

Thank you for your consideration.

cc: Jennifer Troia, Office of the President Pro Tem
Marjorie Swartz, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
Craig Cornett, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
Renita Polk, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4
Theresa Pena, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3
Kirk Feely, Senate Republican Fiscal Office
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