



CWDA

May 20, 2014



The Honorable Ellen Corbett, Chair
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3



Honorable Members
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3
State Capitol Building, Room 5019
Sacramento, CA 95814



California Alliance
OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

RE: Services to Child Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Dear Chair Corbett and Members:

CHILDREN NOW

Our broad coalition of agencies and organizations urges your support to provide \$20.3 million General Funds in fiscal year 2014-15 to protect and serve child victims of commercial sexual exploitation through California's child welfare services programs. This funding is needed to enable California's child protection services system to develop capacity for serving this unique population who have suffered extensive abuse and trauma.



Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is an emerging national and statewide epidemic that deserves our highest attention. Various studies have pointed to the fact that many CSEC victims have had prior involvement with CWS, and some have been recruited while being in the foster care system. In addition, three of the top ten highest trafficking areas in the nation are right here in California: San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego metropolitan areas. California's child welfare system is ill-equipped to respond to the needs of this population. In many respects, these victims are like other children that counties serve in the child welfare services system, but also have unique needs that cannot be fully met with current resources.

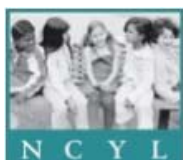


The commercial sexual exploitation of children is a critically important problem in California that requires a comprehensive solution. While some county child welfare agencies have made strides to serve this population, these counties have also taken years to build up their resources and collaborative processes. Meanwhile, this problem continues to grow and spread across the counties.



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For this reason the undersigned agencies urge the Legislature to appropriate \$20.3 million General Funds in 2014-15 to build statewide capacity for serving child victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Resources are needed to provide services to commercially sexually exploited children in three major areas:



Prevention: Training for all child welfare staff, foster caregivers, and youth to recognize and report and respond when there are signs of commercial sexual exploitation.



Intervention: Resources are needed to enable county child welfare to leverage resources from other federal, state, and county agencies and to identify victims and track outcomes. In addition, specialized staff in the twelve large counties are needed to rescue and support victims, working alongside community-based partner organizations and with survivors, to provide services.

Services: CSEC need enhanced supervision and support to protect them which are not currently provided for in the foster care program, including immediate needs for clothing and safe shelter, and long-term services to re-engage CSEC into their schools and healthy relationships.

The initial cost of this proposal includes one-time costs for curriculum development and training of all foster caregivers, youth and child welfare staff. Beginning in 2015-16 the costs are estimated to be \$14.3 million GF to support the on-going services to CSEC.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter on behalf of child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

Sincerely,

Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director
County Welfare Directors Association of CA

John Bauters, Policy Director-Homelessness
Housing California

Angie Schwartz, Policy Program Director
Alliance for Children's Rights

Claire Lipschultz, Esq., State Policy Advocate
National Council of Jewish Women

Carroll Schroeder, Executive Director
California Alliance of Child and Family Services

Minouche Kandel, Esq. Women's Policy Dir.
San Francisco Dept. on the Status of Women

Kelly Brooks-Lindsey, Senior Legislative Rep.
California State Association of Counties

Tia Orr, Senior Government Advocate
Service Employees Union International (SEIU)

Leslie Heimov, Executive Director
Children's Law Center of Los Angeles

Autumn Burris, Founder/Director
Survivors for Solutions

Susanna Kniffen, Associate Director,
Child Welfare Policy, Children NOW

John F. O'Toole, Director
National Center for Youth Law

Jenny Williamson, Founder/CEO
Courage Worldwide, Inc.

Jolena Voorhis, Executive Director
Urban Counties Caucus

John O'Connor, Executive Director
Equality California

Stacey Katz, Executive Director
WestCoast Children's Clinic

Britanny Vanderhoof, Policy Counsel
Polaris Project

Jennifer Rodriguez, Executive Director
Youth Law Center

CSEC Coalition & Support List

Updated 5/20/2014

County Welfare Directors Association of California (sponsor)
Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Alameda County Foster Youth Alliance
Alameda County Social Services Agency
Alliance of Children's Rights
American Association of University Women of California
Butte County Department of Employment and Social Services
Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency
California Alliance of Child and Family Services
California Coalition of Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc.
California Coalition for Youth
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
California Women Lawyers
California Youth Connection
Children NOW
Children's Law Center of California
City and County of San Francisco
County of Orange
Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department
Courage Worldwide, Inc.
The Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (CAST)
Equality California
Housing California
John Burton Foundation
Junior League of San Francisco
LA Gay and Lesbian Center
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Madera County Department of Social Services
Napa County Board of Supervisors

CSEC Coalition (continued)

National Council of Jewish Women

National Center for Youth Law

Oakland City Council

Polaris Project

Riverside County Department of Public Social Services

San Francisco Department on the Status of Women

Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors

Service Employees Union International (SEIU)

Survivors for Solutions

Urban Counties Caucus

Ventura County Board of Supervisors

WestCoast Children's Clinic

Western Center on Law and Poverty

Youth Law Center