



Assembly Member **SANDRÉ SWANSON**

News Release

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## Enhanced Fines for Human Traffickers Advances to Assembly Floor Legislation

*Also enables seizure of criminal assets, funds aid organizations*

**(Sacramento)** - A key piece of human trafficking legislation passed the Assembly Appropriations Committee today with unanimous support and now heads to the full Assembly. AB 17, the Human Trafficking Accountability Act, is another in a series of bills Assemblymember Sandré R. Swanson (D-Alameda) has introduced to combat the human trafficking of minors.

AB 17 would enhance financial penalties for those convicted of human trafficking and allow law enforcement to seize assets connected to traffickers. Significantly, half of the monies collected from these enhanced fines and seizures would only be made available to community based organizations that serve underage victims of human trafficking.

"Human trafficking of children is the new slavery of the 21st century. Commercial sexual exploitation of minors is a growing epidemic in our State, fuelled by high profits and low penalties. In order to address this egregious injustice in our own community, we need to attack the profit motive and cripple this criminal enterprise," charged Assemblymember Swanson.

AB 17 contains three provisions, two of which would target assets generated by human trafficking. Individuals convicted of trafficking of a minor, which also includes pimping and pandering, would be fined up to \$20,000 per count, four times higher than the current \$5,000 fine. Judges also have the ability to add additional penalties, driving up the final value to approximately \$76,000, according to the Public Safety Committee analysis. Additionally, the bill adds the crime of procurement of a minor to the Criminal Enterprise statute, which enables law enforcement to seize the assets of those convicted of procuring or trafficking of a minor.

Ms. Dawn Koepke, who represents the Child Abuse Prevention Center, spoke earlier in favor of the bill. "Minors make up 71% of all sex crimes. Hitting offenders in the pocketbook will enable us to curb this criminal activity," she stated.

Additionally, AB 17 would dedicate half of the funds raised from these fines and seizures to community based nonprofit organizations that help underage victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Support for the bill is broad and includes: The California Commission on the Status of Women, the Child Abuse Prevention Center, the California Family Council, Crime Victims United of California, the City of West Hollywood, and Concerned Women of America.

"Human trafficking of children for commercial sexual exploitation is at the forefront of the new underground economy. Countless drug traffickers are moving into this trade to escape the heavy penalties for dealing drugs. It is time that we remove the profit motive from these criminal enterprises, put these predators out of business, and properly fund the organizations that rescue these innocent children," concluded a determined Assemblymember Swanson.

AB 17 will next be heard on the Assembly floor next week.

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