



Assembly Member **SANDRÉ SWANSON**
News Release

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Human Trafficking Accountability Act Passes Key Senate Committee with Overwhelming Bipartisan Support

Legislation enables seizure of criminal assets, funds community based organizations

(Sacramento) - New legislation that takes aim at human traffickers while providing aid to those organizations that serve underage victims of human trafficking passed 5-0 in the Senate Public Safety Committee today. 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 and commercial sexual exploitation of minors.

“Human trafficking is one of the fastest growing types of organized crime, both locally and internationally. Children are especially attractive targets for these predators, as their sexual exploitation offers high profits with little risk of capture or penalty. We need to address this egregious injustice in our own community, and that means attacking the profit motive which drives this criminal enterprise,” charged Assemblymember Swanson.

AB 17 contains three provisions, two of which target assets generated by human trafficking. Individuals convicted of trafficking of a minor, which also includes pimping and pandering, could 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 the fine up to approximately \$76,000. Additionally, the bill adds the crime of procurement of a minor to the Criminal Enterprise statute, enabling law enforcement to seize the assets of those convicted of procuring or trafficking of a minor. Finally, half of the monies collected from these enhanced fines and seizures would be made available specifically to community based organizations that serve underage victims of human trafficking.

Alameda Assistant District Attorney Sharmin Bock, a strong supporter of the bill with long experience fighting human trafficking stated, “Sadly, for criminals, there is no better investment for your money in these hard economic times than in selling a child for sex. It is high time that we lessen the rewards and increase the risks to pimps and traffickers. AB 17 does exactly that by imposing heavy fines, allowing prosecutors to forfeit other assets, and dedicating these ill-gotten gains to programs that serve commercially sexually exploited children.”

Support for the bill is broad and includes: The California Commission on the Status of Women, the Polaris Project, the Child Abuse Prevention Center, the California Family Council, Crime Victims United of California, the City of West Hollywood, and the 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 now advances to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

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