

Senate Bill 1165

Sexual Abuse and Trafficking Prevention Education

Senators Holly J. Mitchell

THIS BILL

SB 1165 will amend the California Education Code to add sexual abuse and sex trafficking prevention to the comprehensive sexual health education and require that sexual abuse and sex trafficking prevention education be included in the Health Framework for California Public Schools.

ISSUE

The average age of entry into the sex trade is 12-14 years old.¹ Tweens and teens are most vulnerable to the tactics used by human traffickers and exploiters. Almost every trafficked victim has had a history of sexual abuse earlier in his or her childhood, which begins a continuum of sexual exploitation.²

Traffickers recruit their victims in or around many middle and high schools, and some elementary schools. Traffickers also target other locations where youth tend to congregate, such as parks, transit stops, malls, shelters and group homes.³ Traffickers have been known to use other students or young men acting as boyfriends to recruit classmates and friends.

Education is key to preventing sexual abuse and sex trafficking from occurring in the first place.

¹ Smith, L.A., Healy Vardaman, S., & Snow, M.A. (2009). *The national report on domestic minor sex trafficking: America's prostituted children*. Vancouver, WA: Shared Hope International.

² Clawson, H.J., Dutch, N., Solomon, A., & Goldblatt Grace, L. (2009). *Human trafficking into and within the United States: A review of the literature*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

³ Smith, L.A., Healy Vardaman, S., & Snow, M.A. (2009). *The national report on domestic minor sex trafficking: America's prostituted children*. Vancouver, WA: Shared Hope International.

Children recruited into the commercial sex trade have long lasting physical and psychological scars that affect their long term outcomes. They are more likely to live on the fringes of society suffering from homelessness, mental illness, drug addiction and incarceration.

Schools are in a unique position to address these issues, make students aware of these dangers and instruct them on prevention methods. Furthermore, schools have an obligation to foster campus environments that promote student safety.

BACKGROUND

Contrary to popular belief, 72% of trafficked persons in California identified the United States as their country of origin according to the California Attorney General's Office 2012 report.⁴ The California Child Welfare Council found that, "exploited youth come from urban, rural and suburban areas, and exploiters frequently move [victims] between trafficking hubs to further isolate and control them."⁵

Citizens recognize that human trafficking is a serious issue that impacts our communities and have demanded action. Voters passed Proposition 35, the Californians Against Sexual Exploitation (CASE) Act, in 2012 with over 81% approval, making it the most popular initiative in State history. The initiative increased

⁴ California Attorney General's Office. (2012). *The state of human trafficking in California*. Sacramento, CA: Author. Retrieved from <http://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/ht/human-trafficking-2012.pdf>

⁵ Walker, K. *Prevalence of commercially sexually exploited children*. Sacramento, CA: California Health & Human Services Agency.

penalties for trafficker, provided more protection for victims, and mandated law enforcement training.

While punishing the traffickers and those who solicit victims for commercial sex acts is an important step to addressing this scourge, we must find a way to stem the tide of innocent children being lured into this exploitive and abhorrent trade.

CONCLUSION

In addition to the physical part of sexual health, education about the relational part of sexual health is vital to ensuring the total wellbeing of students.

SB 1165 will:

- Recommend the addition of sexual abuse and sex trafficking prevention education to the sexual health education for junior high and high school students.
- Include sexual abuse and sex trafficking prevention education in subsequent revisions of the Health Framework for California Public Schools

Implementing sexual abuse prevention and sex trafficking prevention education in schools would help equip children with knowledge and skills to circumvent the recruiting tactics used by exploiters and traffickers, and will assist students in safely reporting instances of abuse and trafficking.

Consistent with existing law, parents will have the right to review the material and opt out.

SUPPORT

California Against Slavery (Sponsors)
Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse (CORA)
Journey Community Church
Laura's House
Mary Magdalene Project
Red Window Project
Soroptimist International of Vista

Soroptimists Together Against Trafficking (STAT)

OPPOSITION

None

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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