
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Senator Jesse Arreguín, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: SB 1027 **Hearing Date:** April 14, 2026
Author: Strickland
Version: February 10, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: ML

Subject: *California Street Prostitution Issues and Options Task Force*

HISTORY

Source: Orange County Sheriff's Department

Prior Legislation: AB 379 (Shultz), Ch. 82, Stats. of 2025
SB 357 (Wiener), Ch. 86, Stats. of 2022
SB 750 (Melendez), not heard in Senate Public Safety, 2021
SB 35 (Chang), vetoed, 2019
SB 180 (Kuehl), Ch. 239, Stats. of 2005

Support: Arcadia Police Officers' Association, Brea Police Association; Burbank Police Officers' Association; California Association of School Police Chiefs; California Coalition of School Safety Professionals; California Narcotic Officers' Association; California Reserve Peace Officers Association; California State Sheriffs' Association; City of Stanton; Claremont Police Officers Association; Corona Police Officers Association; Culver City Police Officers Association; Fullerton Police Officers' Association; League of California Cities; Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; Los Angeles School Police Management Association; Los Angeles School Police Officers Association; Murrieta Police Officers' Association; Newport Beach Police Association; Orange County Sheriff's Department; Palos Verdes Police Officers Association; Placer County Deputy Sheriffs' Association; Pomona Police Officers' Association; Riverside Sheriffs' Association; Riverside Police Officers Association; Riverside Sheriff's Association; San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department; San Diego County District Attorney's Office; The California Baptist Ministry

Opposition: ACLU California Action; California Coalition for Women Prisoners; Californians United for a Responsible Budget; DeCrimSexWorkCA; Ella Baker Center for Human Rights; Erotic Service Providers Legal, Education, and Research Project; Initiate Justice; Justice2Jobs Coalition; La Defensa; Los Angeles County Public Defender's Union, Local 148; US Prostitutes Collective; Woodhull Freedom Foundation

PURPOSE

The purpose of this bill is to establish the California Street Prostitution Issues and Options Task Force, which would collect data on street prostitution, examine models for enforcing street prostitution laws, measure the impact of recent changes to laws criminalizing street prostitution, and analyze the adequacy of existing state law in addressing street prostitution and human trafficking.

Existing law makes it a misdemeanor to solicit anyone to engage in or engage in lewd or dissolute conduct in any public place or in any place open to the public or exposed to public view. (Pen. Code, § 647, subd. (a).)

Existing law makes it a misdemeanor to solicit, agree to engage in, or engage in any act of prostitution with the intent to receive compensation, money, or anything of value from another person. (Pen. Code, § 647, subd. (b)(1).)

Existing law makes it a misdemeanor, except as specified, to solicit, agree to engage in, or engage in, any act of prostitution with another person who is 18 years of age or older in exchange for the individual providing compensation, money, or anything of value to the other person. (Pen. Code, § 647, subd. (b)(2).)

Existing law makes the aforementioned prostitution offenses inapplicable to a child under 18 years of age who is alleged to have engaged in conduct to receive money or other consideration that would, if committed by an adult, be a violation of these provisions. (Pen. Code, § 647, subd. (b)(5).)

Existing law makes it a misdemeanor, except as specified, to solicit, or agree to engage in, or engage in, any act of prostitution with another person who is a minor in exchange for the individual providing compensation, money, or anything of value to the minor. (Pen. Code, § 647, subd. (b)(3).)

Existing law makes it a misdemeanor for any person to loiter in a public place with the intent to purchase commercial sex. Specifies that the intent to purchase commercial sex is evidenced by acting in a manner and under circumstances that openly demonstrate the purpose of inducing, enticing, or soliciting prostitution, or procuring another to commit prostitution such as circling an area in a motor vehicle and repeatedly beckoning to, contacting, or attempting to contact or stop pedestrians or other motorists, making unauthorized stops along known prostitution tracks, or engaging in other conduct indicative of soliciting to procure another to engage in commercial sex. (Pen. Code, § 653.25.)

Existing law states that a person who deprives or violates the personal liberty of another with the intent to obtain forced labor or services is guilty of human trafficking and shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for 5, 8, or 12 years and a fine of not more than \$500,000. (Pen. Code, § 236.1, subd. (a).)

Existing law states that a person who deprives or violates the personal liberty of another with the intent to commit specified sex crimes including pimping, pandering, or child pornography, is guilty of human trafficking and shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for 8, 14, or 20 years and a fine of not more than \$500,000. (Pen. Code, § 236.1, subd. (b).)

Existing law specifies that a person who causes, induces, or persuades, or attempts to cause, induce, or persuade, a person who is a minor at the time of commission of the offense to engage in a commercial sex act, with the intent to commit specified crimes including pimping, pandering, or child pornography, is guilty of human trafficking. A violation is punishable by imprisonment in the state prison as follows:

- Five, 8, or 12 years and a fine of not more than \$500,000; or,
- Fifteen-years-to-life and a fine of not more than \$500,000 when the offense involves force, fear, fraud, deceit, coercion, violence, duress, menace, or threat of unlawful injury to the victim or to another person. (Pen. Code, § 236.1, subd. (c).)

This bill establishes the California Street Prostitution Issues and Options Task Force (the “Task Force”). Sets forth the requirements the Task Force must meet.

This bill requires that the Task Force be comprised of the following representatives or their designees:

- The Attorney General
- The Chairperson of the Judicial Council
- The Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls
- One representative of the League of California Cities
- One representative of the County Health Executives Association of California
- One representative of the County Welfare Directors Association of California
- One representative of the California State Association of Counties
- One representative of the California District Attorneys Association
- One representative of the California Public Defenders Association
- One representative of the California State Sheriffs’ Association
- One representative of the California Police Chiefs’ Association
- One representative of the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, appointed by the Governor
- One representative of an organization that serves victims of sexual exploitation, sex trafficking, and prostitution, appointed by the Governor
- One representative from an organization that serves victims of sex trafficking in southern California, appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly
- One representative from an organization that serves victims of sex trafficking in northern California, appointed by the Senate Rules Committee

This bill requires that the Task Force do all of the following:

- Collect and organize data on the nature and extent of street prostitution in California;
- Examine models and strategies for enforcing street prostitution laws;
- Measure and evaluate any changes in incidence of, and law enforcement response to, street prostitution following the enactment of Chapter 86 of the Statutes of 2022 (Senate Bill No. 357), monitor and report on the impact of Chapter 82 of the Statutes of 2025 (Assembly Bill No. 379), and identify impacts of those laws on other related issues;
- Analyze the role of street prostitution in human trafficking and the role that law enforcement response to street prostitution has on identifying, protecting against, and preventing human trafficking;

- Analyze existing state law for its adequacy in addressing street prostitution, including any role state law plays in human trafficking, and the impacts on communities resulting from street prostitution;
- If the analysis determines that state law is inadequate, recommend revisions to existing law or the enactment of new law that specifically addresses street prostitution and the impacts of street prostitution and any related human trafficking on communities; and,
- Consult with governmental and nongovernmental organizations in developing recommendations to strengthen state and local efforts to prevent trafficking, protect and assist victims of trafficking, and prosecute traffickers.

This bill requires that whenever possible, members of the Task Force have experience with street prostitution issues or have knowledge of street prostitution issues.

This bill requires that members of the Task Force serve at the pleasure of the respective appointing authority.

This bill requires that the Task Force hold its first meeting by July 1, 2027, that the Task Force meet at least once every two months, that the final meeting be held no later than February 1, 2028, and that all meetings shall be open to the public.

This bill requires that the Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Attorney General, and the Legislature by July 1, 2028. Requires that at the request of any member of the task force, the report may include minority findings and recommendations.

This bill defines “street prostitution” for the purposes of this bill to mean the practice of soliciting or engaging in sexual acts for money in public places, including streets, parks, or street corners, that may involve visible solicitation and performance in nearby vehicles or secluded areas.

This bill defines “trafficking” for the purposes of this bill to mean all acts involved in the recruitment, abduction, transport, harboring, transfer, sale, or receipt of persons, within national or across international borders, through force, coercion, fraud, or deception, to place persons in situations of slavery or slavery-like conditions, forced labor, or services, including forced prostitution or sexual services, domestic servitude, bonded sweatshop labor, or other debt bondage.

COMMENTS

1. Need for This Bill

According to the author:

Senate Bill 1027 restores clarity and accountability to how California addresses street prostitution and its connection to human trafficking. Since the passage of SB 357 in 2021, law enforcement agencies and communities across the state have reported growing challenges in their ability to respond to street prostitution, protecting vulnerable individuals, and addressing the impact on neighborhoods and local businesses. Yet there has been no coordinated, statewide review of how these legal changes are functioning in practice.

SB 1027 establishes the California Street Prostitution Issues and Options Task Force, bringing together law enforcement, judicial representatives, local governments, and victim service organizations to collect data, examine enforcement strategies, and evaluate the effects of recent statutory changes. The task force will analyze the relationship between street prostitution and human trafficking and deliver a public report with evidence-based recommendations to the Attorney General and Legislature.

This bill is a measured and data-centered approach to a complex issue. SB 1027 ensures policymakers have all the facts needed to protect victims, support communities, and strengthen public safety across California.

2. Existing Law Governing Sex Work

In California, acts of prostitution and solicitation for prostitution are crimes. Prostitution is engaging in sexual intercourse or a lewd act in exchange for money or other compensation. Solicitation for prostitution is communicating or accepting a request for sexual intercourse or a lewd act in exchange for money or other compensation.¹ A minor cannot legally consent to sex and is not criminally liable for participating in a commercial sex transaction.²

Until 2022, it was a misdemeanor offense to loiter in a public place for the purpose of engaging in prostitution, meaning loitering with the intent to participate in a commercial sex transaction as a sex buyer or a sex worker.³ The law specified non-exclusive circumstances that *could* be considered in determining whether a person was loitering with intent to commit prostitution:

- Repeatedly beckons to, stops, engages in conversations with, or attempts to stop or engage in conversations with passersby, indicative of soliciting for prostitution;
- Repeatedly stops, or attempts to stop, motor vehicles by hailing the drivers, waving arms, or making any other bodily gestures, or engages or attempts to engage the drivers or passengers of the motor vehicles in conversation, indicative of soliciting for prostitution;
- Has been convicted of violating this section, or other offenses related or involving prostitution, within five years of the arrest under this section;
- Circles an area in a motor vehicle and repeatedly beckons to, contacts, or attempts to contact or stop pedestrians or other motorists, indicative of soliciting for prostitution; and,
- Has engaged, within six months prior to the arrest for loitering, in loitering behavior, or any other behavior indicative of prostitution activity.⁴

In 2022, SB 357 (Wiener), Chapter 86, Statutes of 2022, repealed the loitering offense. In 2025, AB 379 (Shultz), Chapter 82, Statutes of 2025, reestablished the crime of loitering with intent to purchase commercial sex.⁵ This intent is shown by acting in a manner and under circumstances that openly demonstrate the purpose of inducing, enticing, or soliciting prostitution, or procuring another to commit prostitution such as circling an area in a motor vehicle and repeatedly beckoning to, contacting, or attempting to contact or stop pedestrians or other motorists, making unauthorized stops along known prostitution tracks, or engaging in other conduct indicative of

¹ Pen. Code, § 647, subd. (b).

² Pen. Code, § 647, subd. (b)(5).

³ See former Pen. Code, § 653.22.

⁴ Former Pen. Code, § 653.22, subd. (b).

⁵ Pen. Code, § 653.25.

soliciting to procure another to engage in commercial sex.⁶ Notably, AB 379’s new loitering offense may require a jury to presume that any of these elements are evidence of intent, while the prior loitering offense provided that juries could, but were not required, to make the same presumption.⁷

3. Existing Law Governing Human Trafficking

In California, human trafficking is when a person deprives or violates the personal liberty of another with the intent to obtain forced labor or services.⁸ It is punishable as a felony in state prison for 5, 8, or 12 years and a fine of up to \$500,000.⁹

Human trafficking with the intent to commit specified sex crimes including pimping, pandering, or child pornography, is a felony punishable by imprisonment for 8, 14, or 20 years and a fine of up to \$500,000.¹⁰ A person who causes or induces a person who is a minor at the time of commission of the offense to engage in a commercial sex act, with the intent to commit specified crimes including pimping, pandering, or child pornography, is guilty of human trafficking, punishable by imprisonment in the state prison as follows:

- Five, 8, or 12 years and a fine of not more than \$500,000; or,
- Fifteen-years-to-life and a fine of not more than \$500,000 when the offense involves force, fear, fraud, deceit, coercion, violence, duress, menace, or threat of unlawful injury to the victim or to another person.¹¹

4. Research on the Effects of Criminalization on Sex Workers and Survivors of Human Trafficking

According to the Yale Global Health Partnership in June 2020, arrest and conviction records for prostitution-related crimes make it harder for sex workers, and those cited for unlawful sex work, to find alternative employment—holding them in street economies and economic hardships and “exacerbating ongoing race and gender discrimination.”¹² “Criminalization exacerbates the barriers to housing, public benefits, and other social supports especially needed by street-based sex workers.”¹³ “Criminalization of sex work disproportionately affects women, trans and gender nonconforming people, people of color, and immigrant communities.”¹⁴

A study by the International Human Rights Clinic at USC, using interviews with 42 human trafficking experts, a comprehensive literature review, and public records requests, found that law enforcement operations identify few trafficking victims, emphasizing that operations

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ See former Pen. Code, § 653.22, subd. (b).

⁸ Pen. Code, § 236.1, subd. (a).

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Pen. Code, § 236.1, subd. (b).

¹¹ Pen. Code, § 236.1, subd. (c).

¹² Yale Global Health Justice Partnership, *The Harmful Consequences of Sex Work Criminalization on Health and Rights* (Jun. 2020)

<https://law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/area/center/ghjp/documents/consequences_of_criminalization_v2.pdf> [as of March 26, 2026].

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

primarily target sex work and often treat victims as criminals.¹⁵ For example, the National Survivor Network conducted a 2016 survey on the long-term impact of criminal arrests and convictions on survivors of human trafficking; it found that 90.8% of 130 trafficking survivor respondents reported having been arrested (over 40% reporting being arrested 9 times or more) and more than half of the respondents (50.6%) reported that their arrests occurred because of their trafficking.¹⁶ Notably, immigrant survivors of sex trafficking, regardless of whether they are undocumented, can face deportation due to a misdemeanor prostitution charge.¹⁷ Survivors also report that they are pressured by law enforcement to divulge information, and if they refuse, they are charged with crimes.¹⁸

Critics argue that these law enforcement operations are often anti-sex work efforts rebranded as anti-sex trafficking interventions.¹⁹ The USC report recommended that law enforcement reduce anti-trafficking operations and redirect resources to community and public health led approaches to prevent human trafficking, which the report contended are more effective and less harmful to victims, based on available research.²⁰

5. Prior Legislation: The California Alliance to Combat Trafficking and Slavery (California ACTS) Task Force

In 2005, SB 180 (Keuhl) and AB 22 (Lieber) established the California Alliance to Combat Trafficking and Slavery (California ACTS) Task Force.²¹ The California ACTS Task Force was required to be comprised of 24 members, including representatives from the Attorney General; state public health, labor, and welfare agencies; the legislature; the state judiciary; district attorneys; public defenders; law enforcement; university researchers; NGOs; and direct service organizations; and survivors of human trafficking.²²

The California ACTS Task Force was charged with collecting and organizing data regarding human trafficking, measuring and evaluating the state's approach to human trafficking, identifying programs that assist survivors of human trafficking, analyzing existing criminal statutes for their adequacy in addressing human trafficking, facilitating collaboration between government and NGOs, and developing recommendations for improving the state's approach to human trafficking.²³

¹⁵ International Human Rights Clinic at USC Gould School of Law, *Over-Policing Sex Trafficking: How U.S. Law Enforcement Should Reform Operations* (Nov. 2021) <<https://bpb-us-w1.wpmucdn.com/sites.usc.edu/dist/6/1093/files/2021/11/IHRC-Report-1.pdf>> (hereafter "Over-Policing Sex Trafficking") [as of March 26, 2026].

¹⁶ *Id.* at p. 11.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Id.* at p. 12.

¹⁹ *Id.* at p. 11.

²⁰ *Id.* at p. 52.

²¹ Former Pen. Code § 13990 [repealed].

²² Former Pen. Code § 13990, subd. (c) [repealed].

²³ Pen. Code, § 13990, subd. (a).

The final report of the California ACTS Task Force was published in October of 2007.²⁴ The report broke its findings and recommendations into four categories: Identifying the scope of human trafficking, protecting and assisting victims of human trafficking, investigating and prosecuting human traffickers, and preventing human trafficking.

In 2019, the Legislature passed SB 35 (Chang) to reestablish the California ACTS Task Force. Governor Newsom vetoed SB 35, noting in his veto message that the task force should be considered through the budget process, not stand-alone legislation. SB 35 would have required the second California ACTS Task Force to be comprised of 15 members, including representatives from the Attorney General; state public health, labor, welfare, and emergency services agencies; the state judiciary; district attorneys; public defenders; law enforcement; NGOs; direct service organizations; and survivors of human trafficking.

6. Effects of This Bill

This bill would establish the California Street Prostitution Issues and Options Task Force (the “Task Force”). The Task Force would be comprised of the following representatives or their designees:

- The Attorney General
- The Chairperson of the Judicial Council
- The Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women and Girls
- One representative of the League of California Cities
- One representative of the County Health Executives Association of California
- One representative of the County Welfare Directors Association of California
- One representative of the California State Association of Counties
- One representative of the California District Attorneys Association
- One representative of the California Public Defenders Association
- One representative of the California State Sheriffs’ Association
- One representative of the California Police Chiefs’ Association
- One representative of the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, appointed by the Governor
- One representative of an organization that serves victims of sexual exploitation, sex trafficking, and prostitution, appointed by the Governor
- One representative from an organization that serves victims of sex trafficking in southern California, appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly
- One representative from an organization that serves victims of sex trafficking in northern California, appointed by the Senate Rules Committee

This bill further requires that whenever possible, members of the Task Force have experience with street prostitution issues or have knowledge of street prostitution issues. Members of the Task Force would serve at the pleasure of the respective appointing authority.

²⁴ California Alliance to Combat Trafficking and Slavery Task Force, *Human Trafficking in California: Final Report* (Oct. 2007) <https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/publications/Human_Trafficking_Final_Report.pdf> [as of Mar. 26, 2026].)

This bill requires that the Task Force do the following:

- Collect and organize data on the nature and extent of street prostitution in California
- Examine models and strategies for enforcing street prostitution laws
- Measure and evaluate any changes in incidence of, and law enforcement response to, street prostitution following the enactment of Chapter 86 of the Statutes of 2022 (Senate Bill No. 357), monitor and report on the impact of Chapter 82 of the Statutes of 2025 (Assembly Bill No. 379), and identify impacts of those laws on other related issues
- Analyze the role of street prostitution in human trafficking and the role that law enforcement response to street prostitution has on identifying, protecting against, and preventing human trafficking
- Analyze existing state law for its adequacy in addressing street prostitution, including any role state law plays in human trafficking, and the impacts on communities resulting from street prostitution
- If the analysis determines that state law is inadequate, recommend revisions to existing law or the enactment of new law that specifically addresses street prostitution and the impacts of street prostitution and any related human trafficking on communities
- Consult with governmental and nongovernmental organizations in developing recommendations to strengthen state and local efforts to prevent trafficking, protect and assist victims of trafficking, and prosecute traffickers

This bill requires that the Task Force hold its first meeting by July 1, 2027, that the Task Force meet at least once every two months, and that the final meeting be held no later than February 1, 2028. All meetings would be open to the public. The Task Force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Attorney General, and the Legislature by July 1, 2028. At the request of any member of the task force, the report may include minority findings and recommendations.

7. Differences Between This Bill’s Task Force and the California ACTS Task Force

The Task Force of this bill differs from the prior California ACTS Task Force in that its primary focus is to address street prostitution, rather than human trafficking; its objectives focus less on victims or survivors and more on state law and law enforcement; and its membership contains fewer direct services organizations, survivors, and state government officials.

The Task Force of this bill is named the “California Street Prostitution Issues and Options Task Force.” By contrast, the prior task force was titled the “California Alliance to Combat Trafficking and Slavery Task Force.” As is evident in their names, this bill’s Task Force targets street prostitution, while the California ACTS Task Force targeted primarily human trafficking. This difference is also reflected in the stated objectives of each respective task force.

Further, this bill focuses more on state law and law enforcement, while the California ACTS Task Force focused more on victims and survivors. This bill mentions victims or survivors in one of its seven objectives, while the California ACTS Task Force’s objectives mentioned victims or survivors in four of its seven objectives.

Finally, this bill's Task Force membership is different than that of the original California ACTS Task Force. In total, this bill has 15 members, while the original California ACTS Task Force had 24 members. Specifically, the original California ACTS Task Force contained representatives from state public health, labor, and welfare agencies; the legislature; university researchers; mental health providers; certain NGOs; a greater number of direct services organizations; and survivors of human trafficking, which are not including the membership in this bill.

In particular, this bill includes only three positions for direct service organizations, while the original California ACTS Task Force had six. Furthermore, this bill also does not require any mental health professionals or university researchers, and this bill does not require any positions specifically for any survivors of human trafficking, while the original California ACTS Task Force did. Finally, this bill's membership includes representatives of city and county associations, rather than state legislators, and it includes representatives of county health and welfare executive associations rather than state health and welfare agency officials.

8. Issues for the Committee to Consider

a. Task Force Timeline

This bill requires that the Task Force hold its first meeting by July 1, 2027, that the Task Force meet at least once every two months, and that the final meeting be held no later than February 1, 2028. The final report is due July 1, 2028. Given that this legislation would go into effect January 1, 2027, if signed by the Governor, that leaves little time to assemble the Task Force. Additionally, eight months is a limited timeframe to achieve some of the goals set out for the Task Force. The Committee may consider extending the deadline for the Task Force's final report, so that it has sufficient time to complete its mandates.

b. Membership

The Committee may wish to alter the membership of the Task Force to provide greater representation for survivors and direct service providers. For example, the Committee may consider requiring this Task Force include more direct service organizations, at least one survivor of trafficking, and at least one mental health professional with experience sex work and human trafficking, given the importance of representing the perspectives of those with lived experience of sex work and human trafficking. Furthermore, the committee may consider including representatives from the State Department of Health, State Department of Social Services, and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, given the importance of these agencies in coordinating state policy—and the efficacy of public health approaches to sex work and human trafficking, as discussed above. Finally, the Committee may consider adding at least one university researcher to ensure the Task Force follows the most current research and evidence on the issues of sex work and human trafficking.

c. Data Collection

Additionally, the Task Force states that one of its goals is to “collect and organize data on the nature and extent of street prostitution in California,” but it does not specify how this data is to be collected, and what kind of data it must collect. By contrast, SB 35 (Chang) required its

proposed task force to assess the cost of a prevalence study that addresses trafficking, including the identity characteristics of those being trafficked, and to identify the best entity to conduct the study and how often such a study should be conducted. If the goal of this Task Force is to determine the prevalence of street prostitution and human trafficking in California, such a prevalence study would likely be a more effective tool for doing so. Moreover, eight months is likely too short a timeframe for the Task Force collect comprehensive, scientifically sound quantitative data on the prevalence of these complex issues. This risks the Task Force relying on anecdotal evidence and incomplete data to make its recommendations.

9. Argument in Support

The Orange County Sheriff's Department writes:

In 2022 the Legislature narrowly passed Senator Weiner's SB 357 and, unfortunately, it was signed into law by Governor Newsom. SB 357 repealed a section of the penal code that prohibited loitering for prostitution. This irresponsible action hindered the ability of law enforcement officers to help victims of sex trafficking. The loitering law was a tool used by investigators to engage potential victims and determine if they were a victim of human trafficking. It also helped us identify those who may be conducting the larger sex trafficking operation.

Absent this tool, there has been a proliferation of prostitution in cities across California. Proponents of SB 357 fail to understand the nature of the human trafficking industry. Research and law enforcement experience continues to show the prevalence of trafficking victims among those engaged in prostitution. Recognizing this fact, the Orange County Sheriff's Department and our partner agencies have long taken a victim-centered approach to addressing prostitution.

SB 357's removal of the legal barriers to loitering has allowed human traffickers to operate more freely knowing that their victims are less likely to face interaction with law enforcement. Rather than help victims, SB 357's normalization of the sex trade increases the demand for commercial sex services and the likelihood that human trafficking will occur to meet this demand.

While the Legislature has demonstrated a reluctance to repeal SB 357 outright, SB 1027 offers a pathway toward repairing the unintended consequences of that law. By establishing the California Street Prostitution Issues and Options Task Force, this legislation will allow policymakers, law enforcement, service providers, and community stakeholders to examine the real-world impacts of SB 357 and develop thoughtful, evidence-based recommendations to restore effective tools for combating human trafficking. This collaborative process can help guide meaningful reforms that address the gaps created by SB 357 while ensuring a victim-centered approach moving forward.

10. Argument in Opposition

The Erotic Service Providers Legal, Education and Research Project writes:

This bill is a misleading and unnecessary bill. And it is clearly a rigged attempt to justify even more punitive legislation against sex workers and their clients.

The bill's title claims that it addresses 'human trafficking'. But it immediately conflates 'street prostitution' and 'human trafficking'. These are two very different things.

It then pivots to street prostitution in California – and sets out the aim of collecting data on its nature and extent. Despite the title, it does not mention collecting data on trafficking. And it does not explain how the part-time members of the task force will collect data at all.

It then states the aim of the Task Force: to “Analyze existing state law for its adequacy in addressing street prostitution, including any role state law plays in human trafficking, and the impacts on communities resulting from street prostitution.” Again it conflates 'street prostitution' and 'human trafficking'. And it assumes (without foundation) that state law is inadequate – setting the scene for even more police centered legislation.

This is a rigged process. The proposed makeup of the Task Force indicates its likely conclusion. It is composed almost entirely of legal officers and law enforcement officers. It includes a sprinkling of representatives from non-accountable 'anti trafficking' non-profits – who stand to gain financially from its recommendations. But it notably does not contain any representatives from sex worker or civil rights advocacy groups who might present alternative views.

Prostitution (sex work) in the United States has a history as long as the country itself. And it has survived despite ever increasing criminalization. Yet criminalization does nothing to diminish the existence of sex work; it only serves to drive sex workers and their clients underground and make society at large substantially less safe by misusing public safety dollars.

Sex work acts as a social safety net. It should be seen as a response to severe economic hardship and massive inequality. If the state really cared about 'victims', it would do something about the lack of affordable housing, healthcare, childcare and wage theft. And it would get behind initiatives like the Guaranteed Care Income program piloted in San Francisco last year (see <https://esplerp.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/guaranteed-care-income-sf-evaluation-report-final.pdf>).

This bill does not care about 'victims'. It is yet another attempt to make prostitution move to the next block, the next town through punitive legislation. And that attempt (like all before it) will fail. But it will incur significant human cost on the poorest and most vulnerable of which SB1027 does nothing to assess nor address through reparations.

There is no need for this Task Force. And it will only do harm to the likes of which the state has no intention of ever acknowledging or taking responsibility for.

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