
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Senator Jesse Arreguín, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 1541 **Hearing Date:** June 9, 2026
Author: Dixon
Version: February 9, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: ML

Subject: *Human trafficking: data*

HISTORY

Source: Author

Prior Legislation: AB 1239 (Dixon), Ch. 393, Stats. of 2025
SB 259 (Nielsen), Ch. 245, Stats. of 2020
AB 2524 (Irwin), Ch 418, Stats. of 2016

Support: California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls

Opposition: None known

Assembly Floor Vote: 68 - 0

PURPOSE

The purpose of this bill is to require the Department of Justice (DOJ) to report the total number of arrests and convictions for each type of human trafficking offense, including labor trafficking, sex trafficking, and trafficking of a minor.

Existing law states that any 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 provides that any person who deprives or violates the personal liberty of another with the intent to effect or maintain procurement for sex work, pimping, pandering, procurement of a child for prostitution, abduction of a minor for sex work, sale or production of child sexual assault material (CSAM), sexual exploitation of a child, employment of a minor for CSAM, promotion of CSAM, obscene live conduct, or extortion, 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 states that any 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 effect or maintain a violation of specified sex offenses, including procurement for sex work, pimping, pandering, procurement of a child for prostitution,

abduction of a minor for sex work, sale or production of CSAM, sexual exploitation of a child, employment of a minor for CSAM, promotion of CSAM, obscene live conduct, or extortion is guilty of human trafficking, punishable as follows:

- 5, 8, or 12 years and a fine of not more than \$500,000.
- 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)(1)-(2).)

Existing law requires DOJ to collect criminal justice data from designated state and local agencies and instructs agencies on proper data reporting and recordkeeping standards. Requires DOJ to process and analyze the specified data, share necessary information with federal authorities, and publish annual criminal statistics through its OpenJustice Web portal. Further requires DOJ to periodically review and improve criminal justice data systems, by specifically reporting on California's transition to incident-based crime reporting aligned with the National Incident-Based Reporting System. (Pen. Code, § 13010.)

Existing law requires the DOJ to maintain a data set that contains the number of crimes reported, number of clearances, and clearance rates in California, as provided by local law enforcement agencies. Requires the data set to be published annually through the OpenJustice Web portal. (Pen. Code, § 13013.)

Existing law requires the information published on the OpenJustice Web portal to contain statistics showing, among other things, the following:

- The number and the types of offenses known to the public authorities;
- The personal and social characteristics of criminals and delinquents;
- The administrative actions taken by law enforcement, judicial, penal, and correctional agencies or institutions in dealing with criminals or delinquents;
- The total number of civilian complaints alleging criminal conduct. (Pen. Code, § 13012, subd. (a)(1)-(5).)

Existing law requires the information published on the OpenJustice Web portal to include information concerning arrests for human trafficking and the number of individuals reported as a victim of human trafficking through the California Incident-Based Reporting System. (Pen. Code, § 13012.9.)

This bill requires the DOJ to report, in addition to data on the number of arrests for and the number of reported victims of human trafficking, data on the number of convictions for human trafficking.

This bill requires the data on all of the above categories to be disaggregated by labor trafficking, sex trafficking, and trafficking of a minor.

This bill requires DOJ, in addition to data from the California Incident-Based Reporting System, to include data from state summary criminal history information.

COMMENTS

1. Need for This Bill

The author writes:

Human trafficking is a heinous form of modern-day slavery and has no place in the great state of California. It is the legislature's responsibility to do everything it can to assist victims and families impacted by trafficking, because even one victim is too many.

While we have made significant progress in raising awareness and punishing perpetrators, there is still a lot of work to be done. One significant shortcoming that still exists is the startling lack of data on human trafficking within California. The most recent DOJ report on human trafficking was released in 2012, nearly 15 years ago. AB 1239 began the important process of increasing the amount of data available to the public about human trafficking and AB 1541 will expand that effort further.

2. Human Trafficking Data in California

According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, California is one of the largest sites of human trafficking in the United States. In 2018, 1,656 cases of human trafficking were reported in California. Of those cases, 1,226 were sex trafficking cases, 151 were labor trafficking cases, 110 involved both labor and sex trafficking, and in 169 cases the type of trafficking was not specified. (California Department of Justice, *What is Human Trafficking*, <<https://oag.ca.gov/human-trafficking/what-is>> [accessed May 26, 2026].)

Human trafficking is often underreported. Victims of human trafficking are hesitant to come forward because of their fear of being deported. Further, law enforcement often report human trafficking offenses as sex offenses and have difficulty separating human trafficking from other offenses. (Rescue & Restore Victims of Human Trafficking, Resources: The Mindset of a Human Trafficking Victim, <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/usao-ndia/legacy/2011/10/14/law_mindset_victim%20%282%29.pdf> [accessed May 26, 2026].) One study found that the official trafficking numbers in one jurisdiction represented as little as 14% and at most 18% of the potential total trafficking victims. (National Institute of Justice, Gaps in Reporting Human Trafficking Incidents Result in Significant Undercounting, (August 4, 2020) <<https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/gaps-reporting-human-trafficking-incidents-result-significant-undercounting>> [as of May 26, 2026].)

Existing law requires DOJ to collect criminal justice data from designated state and local agencies and instructs agencies on proper data reporting and recordkeeping standards. (Pen. Code, § 13010.) DOJ must maintain a data set for specified crimes that contains the number of crimes reported, number of clearances, and clearance rates in California, as provided by local law enforcement agencies. The data set is required to be published annually through the OpenJustice web portal. (Pen. Code, § 13013.)

Existing law requires the information published on the OpenJustice web portal to contain statistics for specified offenses, showing, among other things, the following:

- The number and the types of offenses known to the public authorities;
- The personal and social characteristics of criminals and delinquents;
- The administrative actions taken by law enforcement, judicial, penal, and correctional agencies or institutions in dealing with criminals or delinquents;
- The total number of civilian complaints alleging criminal conduct (Pen. Code, § 13012, subd. (a)(1)-(5).)

Given the prevalence of human trafficking in California, AB 1239 (Dixon), Chapter 393, Statutes of 2025, required the DOJ to begin tracking and reporting data on their OpenJustice web portal related to the number of individuals arrested for human trafficking and the number of individuals who are reported as victims of human trafficking. (Pen. Code, § 13012.9.)

Currently, the OpenJustice web portal does not list separate data entries for human trafficking arrests or reported victims of human trafficking. DOJ has indicated its staff are working to implement the increased data requirements required by AB 1239. DOJ estimates that the additional data will likely become public in July 2026, which is standard given their internal timeline for incorporating any new data requests into their annual data reconciliation process.

3. Effect of This Bill

This bill would expand these reporting requirements and provide additional, more granular, human trafficking data to the public. Specifically, this bill would require DOJ to report the total number of arrests and convictions for each type of human trafficking offense, including labor trafficking, sex trafficking, and trafficking of a minor. Additionally, this bill requires DOJ to include data on human trafficking from DOJ's state summary criminal history information, in addition to data from the California Incident-Based Reporting System.

The DOJ indicates that it receives relevant human trafficking data from two active reporting systems: the California Incident-Based Reporting System and the state summary criminal history information maintained by DOJ. The DOJ relies on the California Incident-Based Reporting System to determine the number of reported victims of human trafficking and relies on the state summary criminal history information to discern the number of convictions and arrests related to human trafficking. The DOJ indicates that it is feasible to disaggregate the data by type of human trafficking for its data points regarding convictions, arrests, and victims, but warns that it would be infeasible to determine any connection between the reported convictions or arrests, and how many reported victims resulted from a particular offense.

4. Argument in Support

The California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls writes:

AB 1541 fills an important gap in existing law and the current collection of human trafficking data by requiring the addition of reporting on survivors, amongst other information. The annual Crime in California report currently does

not report on this type of data, which can critically inform partners and the public about the impact of human trafficking and assist in efforts to combat it.

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