
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Senator Jesse Arreguín, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2720 **Hearing Date:** June 16, 2026
Author: Schiavo
Version: May 18, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: AB

Subject: *Human trafficking victim support coordinator*

HISTORY

Source: Santa Clara Human Trafficking Task Force

Prior Legislation: SB 376 (Rubio), Ch. 109, Stats. of 2023
AB 449 (Ting), Ch. 524, Stats. of 2023
SB 86 (Seyarto), Ch. 105, Stats. of 2023
AB 1947 (Ting), died on Senate Inactive File, 2022
AB 998 (Grayson), Ch. 802, Stats. of 2018
AB 22 (Lieber), Ch. 240, Stats. of 2006

Support: Unknown

Opposition: None known

Assembly Floor Vote: 78 - 0

PURPOSE

The purpose of this bill is to require each law enforcement agency with more than 25 peace officers to designate at least one human trafficking victim support coordinator by January 1, 2028.

Existing law establishes the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) to set minimum standards for the recruitment and training of peace officers, develop training courses and curriculum, and establish a professional certificate program that awards different levels of certification based on training, education, experience, and other relevant prerequisites. (Pen. Code, §§ 830-832.10; 13500 et seq.)

Existing law provides that POST has, among others, the power to develop and implement programs to increase the effectiveness of law enforcement and, when those programs involve training and education courses, to cooperate with and secure the cooperation of state-level peace officers, agencies, and bodies having jurisdiction over systems of public higher education in continuing the development of college-level training and education programs. (Pen. Code, § 13500.3, subd. (e).)

Existing law requires POST to submit annually a report to the Legislature on the overall effectiveness of any additional funding for improving peace officer training, including the

number of peace officers trained by law enforcement agency, by course, and by how the training was delivered, as well as the training provided and the descriptions of the training. (Pen. Code, § 13500.5, subds. (a) & (b).)

Existing law requires POST to develop and deliver training courses for peace officers on a wide array of topics, including, the use of tear gas, SWAT operations, elder abuse, persons with disabilities, behavioral health, technology crimes, sexual assault, first aid, missing persons, gang and drug enforcement, use of force and human trafficking, among others. (Pen. Code, §§ 13514-13519.15.)

Existing law requires POST to develop and implement a course or courses of instruction for the training of peace officers in California on commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and victims of human trafficking that shall include specified topics and be developed with input from survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, the appropriate local and state agencies, and advocates that have expertise in CSEC and human trafficking, as specified. (Pen. Code, § 13516.5.)

Existing law requires POST, in consultation with subject-matter experts including, but not limited to, law enforcement agencies, civil rights groups, academic experts, and the DOJ, to develop guidelines and a course of instruction and training for law enforcement officers who are employed as peace officers, or who are not yet employed as a peace officer but are enrolled in a training academy for law enforcement officers, addressing hate crimes. (Pen. Code, § 13519.6, subd. (a).)

Existing law requires POST to implement a course of instruction for the training of law enforcement officers in California on the handling of human trafficking complaints to develop guidelines for law enforcement response to human trafficking. The course of instruction and the guidelines shall stress the dynamics and manifestations of human trafficking, identifying and communicating with victims, providing documentation that satisfy the Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) endorsement required by federal law, collaboration with federal law enforcement officials, therapeutically appropriate investigative techniques, the availability of civil and immigration remedies and community resources, and protection of the victim. Where appropriate, the training presenters shall include human trafficking experts with experience in the delivery of direct services to victims of human trafficking. (Pen. Code, § 13519.14.)

Existing law authorizes a city, county, city and county, or community-based non-profit to establish a domestic violence multidisciplinary personnel team and a human trafficking multidisciplinary personnel team consisting of two or more person strained in the prevention, identification, management, or treatment of domestic violence or human trafficking. (Pen. Code, § 1370.)

Existing law gives a victim of sex assault has the right to have a victim advocate and a support person at law enforcement interviews. (Pen. Code, § 679.04)

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,
- 15 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).)

Existing law defines “human trafficking caseworker” as a person working for a human trafficking victim service organization, whether financially compensated or not, for the purpose of rendering advice or assistance to victims of human trafficking, who meets the following requirements:

- Has an advanced degree or license, such as a master’s degree in counseling, social work, or a related field and at least one year of experience in a caseworker role working directly with victims of human trafficking.
- Has at least 40 hours of training, as specified, and is supervised by an individual who qualifies as a human trafficking caseworker. (Evid. Code, § 1038.2, subd. (c).)

Existing law defines “human trafficking victim service organization” as a nongovernmental organization or entity that provides shelter, program, or other support services to victims of human trafficking and their children and that does all of the following:

- Employs staff that meet the requirements of a human trafficking caseworker as set forth in this section.
- Operates a telephone hotline, advertised to the public, for survivor crisis calls.
- Offers psychological support and peer counseling provided in accordance with this section.
- Makes staff available during normal business hours to assist victims of human trafficking who need shelter, programs, or other support services. (Evid. Code, § 1038.2, subd. (d).)

Existing law provides that a victim of human trafficking or abuse has the right to have a human trafficking advocate, as defined, and a support person of the victim’s choosing present at an interview by a law enforcement authority, prosecutor, or the suspect’s defense attorney, although the law enforcement officer or prosecutor may exclude the support person from the interview if

the law enforcement officer or prosecutor believes that the support person's presence would be detrimental to the process. (Pen. Code, § 236.21, subd. (a).)

Existing law provides that prior to the commencement of the initial interview by a law enforcement authority or a prosecutor pertaining to a criminal action arising out of a human trafficking incident, a victim of human trafficking or abuse shall be notified orally or in writing by the attending law enforcement authority or prosecutor that the victim has the right to have a human trafficking advocate and a support person of the victim's choosing present at the interview. (Pen. Code, § 236.21, subd. (b).)

This bill provides that each law enforcement agency that employs more than 25 full-time sworn peace officers shall designate at least one human trafficking victim support coordinator by no later than January 1, 2028.

This bill provides that a human trafficking victim support coordinator may be a nonsworn employee.

This bill requires a human trafficking victim support coordinator to take the course of instruction described above related to the handling of human trafficking complaints by law enforcement no later than 6 months after designation, and provides that upon completion of the course, the coordinator shall service as a liaison between trusted community-based organizations and victims

This bill provides that by July 1, 2028 each law enforcement agency shall display on their internet website the following information:

- A list of trusted community-based organizations available to support human trafficking victims within the agency's jurisdiction.
- If applicable, the email address and the direct office phone line of any designated human trafficking victim support coordinators.

This bill defines "human trafficking" consistent with the definition of the crime of human trafficking in existing law.

This bill defines "law enforcement agency" as any department or agency of the state, or any local government, special district, or other political subdivision thereof, that employs any peace officer.

COMMENTS

1. Need for This Bill

According to the author:

Community-based human trafficking organizations are on the front-line providing housing, health and many other essential services for victims. These organizations often alert law enforcement agencies when children go missing and serve as an essential link between officers investigating cases and families. Too often though, when these organizations attempt to follow up with law enforcement agencies on

specific cases or outcomes there is not a single point of contact to assist them or direct victims towards services they provide. AB 2720 will strengthen the partnership between agencies and trusted community organizations by designating a human trafficking victim support coordinator to serve as a liaison between the agency and community organizations. It takes a whole of community approach to ensure that victims don't fall through the cracks and receive the services they need to keep them safe.

2. Human Trafficking and Existing Criminal Penalties

According to the California Department of Justice, human trafficking, also known as trafficking in persons or modern-day slavery, is a crime that involves compelling or coercing a person to provide labor or services, or to engage in commercial sex acts. The coercion can be subtle or overt, physical or psychological, and may involve the use of violence, threats, lies, or debt bondage, and does not require travel or transportation of the victim across local, state or international borders.¹ Human trafficking is among the world's fastest growing criminal enterprises and is estimated to be a \$150 billion-a-year global industry, and the DOJ asserts that the perpetrators of human trafficking have become more sophisticated and organized, requiring an equally sophisticated response from law enforcement and its partners to disrupt and dismantle their networks.²

The United States is widely regarded as a destination country for human trafficking. Federal reports have estimated that 14,500 to 17,500 victims are trafficked into the United States annually, which does not include the number of victims who are trafficked within the United States each year. Moreover, California – a populous border state with a significant immigrant population and the world's fifth largest economy – is one of the nation's top destination states for trafficking human beings. According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, nearly 12,000 cases of human trafficking were identified in 2024, involving 21,865 distinct victims. California was home to 1,733 of those cases, involving 3,603 victims, most of which involved sex trafficking.³

The DOJ's website on human trafficking underscores that there is no single profile of a human trafficking victim:

Victims of human trafficking include not only men and women lured into forced labor by the promise of a better life in the United States, but also boys and girls who were born and raised here in California. Trafficking victims come from diverse backgrounds in terms of race, color, national origin, disability, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, education level, and citizenship status, but one characteristic that they usually share is some form of vulnerability. Trafficking victims are often isolated from their families and social networks and, in some cases, are separated from their country of origin, native language, and culture. Many domestic victims of sex trafficking are runaway or homeless youth and/or come from backgrounds of sexual and physical

¹ "What is Human Trafficking?" *Department of Justice*, <https://oag.ca.gov/human-trafficking/what-is#top>

² "Human Trafficking," *Department of Justice*, <https://oag.ca.gov/human-trafficking>

³ National Human Trafficking Hotline website, <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/statistics/california> (as of June 3, 2026.)

abuse, incest, poverty, or addiction. Traffickers exploit these vulnerabilities, promising the victims love, a good job, or a more stable life.⁴

The California Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), enacted in 2006, established human trafficking for forced labor or services as a felony crime.⁵ The crime of human trafficking in existing law is committed when a person deprives or violates the personal liberty of another with the intent to obtain forced labor or services, and is punishable as a felony in state prison for 5, 8, or 12 years and a fine of up to \$500,000.⁶

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 \$500,000.⁷ 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 for 5, 8, or 12 years; or, when the offense involves force, fear, fraud, deceit, coercion, violence, duress, menace, or threat of unlawful injury to the victim or to another person, for 15 years to life.⁸

3. Support for Victims of Human Trafficking

In addition to criminalizing the act of human trafficking, the TVPA also enacted a related evidentiary protection granting communications between a human trafficking caseworker and a victim privileged status.⁹ Since then, as awareness of the vulnerability of human trafficking victims has grown, the Legislature has enacted additional measures focused on supporting and protecting victims. For instance, in 2019, AB 2992 (Daly), Chapter 973, Statutes of 2018, required POST to develop and implement a training specifically dedicated to commercial sexual exploitation of children and victims of human trafficking.¹⁰ Most notably, in 2023, SB 376 (Rubio) Chapter 109, Statutes of 2023 provided that a victim of human trafficking has the right to have a human trafficking advocate and a support person of the victim's choosing present at an interview by a law enforcement authority, prosecutor, or the suspect's defense attorney.¹¹

California is home to myriad community based organizations focused on providing direct services to victims of human trafficking, such as the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST).¹² However, as cited in comment 1 of the analysis, the author of this bill argues that these organizations often face challenges in connecting with law enforcement agencies responsible for the a victim's case. Moreover, according to the author, "existing law does not facilitate cooperation between law enforcement agencies (LEA) and human trafficking victim serving organizations. When human trafficking organizations inquire about individual cases or missing persons suspected of being trafficked there is no single individual that is the point of contact."

⁴ See website linked in fn. 1, supra.

⁵ AB 22 (Lieber), Ch. 240, Stats. of 2006.

⁶ Pen. Code, § 236.1, subd. (a).

⁷ Pen. Code, § 236.1, subd. (b).

⁸ Pen. Code, § 236.1, subd. (c). These crimes also involve a financial penalty of \$500,000.

⁹ Evid. Code, § 1038.

¹⁰ Pen. Code, § 13516.5.

¹¹ Pen. Code, § 236.21.

¹² <https://www.castla.org>

Accordingly, this bill requires each law enforcement agency that employs more than 25 full-time sworn peace officers to designate at least 1 human trafficking victim support coordinator by no later than January 1, 2028. This coordinator, who may be a nonsworn employee and is required to take a specified POST training on handling human trafficking complaints, will be tasked with serving as a “liaison between trusted community-based organizations and victims.” This provision raises several issues that the author and committee should consider: first, it is unclear which organizations might be considered trusted. Is this up to the discretion of the law enforcement agency, or should the term “trusted” be defined in the bill? Second, although the bill specifies that the coordinator will act as a “liaison between trusted community-based organizations and victims,” this language seems incongruous with the bill’s stated goal, which is to facilitate communication between victims (who may be represented by trusted organizations) and the law enforcement agencies themselves. Thus, language that is more likely to effectuate the author’s goal might provide that the coordinator shall “act as a liaison between trusted community-based organizations, victims, and the law enforcement agency.” Third, as mentioned above, the bill requires the coordinator to take a POST course on human trafficking complaints. What if the coordinator is a sworn officer who has already taken that course, perhaps recently? Another provision of this bill requires law enforcement agencies subject to its provisions to display a list of trusted organizations and coordinator contact information on their internet website. This provision of the bill applies to *all* law enforcement agencies in the state, which include any state or local agency that employs peace officers. Thus, the bill would require agencies like the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control or the Department of Fish and Wildlife, to post a list of such organizations. Given that many of these agencies hardly intersect with human trafficking investigations, if at all, is this requirement too broad?

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