
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Senator Jesse Arreguín, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2599 **Hearing Date:** June 30, 2026
Author: Bryan
Version: April 16, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: NDT

Subject: *Slavery: corporate disclosures*

HISTORY

Source: Alliance for Reparations, Reconciliation, and Truth

Prior Legislation: AB 3121 (Weber), Ch. 319, Stats. of 2020
SB 657 (Steinberg), Ch. 556, Stats. of 2010
SB 1737 (Hayden), Ch. 1038, Stats. of 2000
SB 2199 (Hayden), Ch. 934, Stats. of 2000

Support: All of US or None Orange County; Black Women Organized for Political Action; Council on American-Islamic Relations, California; Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement; Ella Baker Center for Human Rights; Families Inspiring Reentry & Reunification 4 Everyone; Healing Justice Santa Barbara; Healthy Black Families; Inland Empire Black Worker Center; Japanese American Citizens League, Berkeley Chapter; LA Voice; League of Women Voters of California; Live Free California; Nikkei Progressives; San Jose Nikkei Resisters; Starting Over INC.; Starting Over Strong

Opposition: American Council of Life Insurers; American Property Casualty Insurance Association; Association of California Life & Health Insurance Companies; National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies; Personal Insurance Federation of California

Assembly Floor Vote: 58 - 17

PURPOSE

The purpose of this bill is to require businesses operating in California with gross annual receipts of over \$100 million to provide information and records relating to their past commercial activities related to slavery, as specified, and for that information to be made publicly available.

Existing law provides that “the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.” (U.S. Const., 4th Amend.)

Existing law provides that “the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable seizures and searches may not be violated; and a warrant may not issue except on probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons and things to be seized.” (Cal. Const., art. I, § 13.)

Existing law requires every retail seller and manufacturer doing business in the state and having annual worldwide gross receipts that exceed \$100 million to disclose, as set forth below, its efforts to eradicate slavery and human trafficking from its direct supply chain for tangible goods offered for sale; the disclosure must be posted on the retailer or manufacturer’s website, as specified. (Civ. Code, § 1714.43.)

Existing law requires the disclosure, at a minimum, to disclose to what extent, if any, that the retail seller or manufacturer does each of the following:

- Engages in verification of product supply chains to evaluate and address risks of human trafficking and slavery. The disclosure shall specify if the verification was not conducted by a third party.
- Conducts audits of suppliers to evaluate supplier compliance with company standards for trafficking and supply chains. The disclosure shall specify if the verification was not an independent, unannounced audit.
- Requires direct suppliers to certify that materials incorporated into the product comply with the laws regarding slavery and human trafficking of the country or countries in which they are doing business.
- Maintains internal accountability standards and procedures for employees or contractors failing to meet company standards regarding slavery and trafficking.
- Provides company employees and management, who have direct responsibility for supply chain management, training on human trafficking and slavery, particularly with respect to mitigating risks within the supply chains of products. (Civ. Code, § 1714.43.)

Existing law requires a person that submits a bid or proposal to, or otherwise proposes to enter into or renew a contract with, a state agency with respect to any contract in the amount of \$100,000 or more to certify, under penalty of perjury, at the time the bid or proposal is submitted or the contract is renewed, all of the following:

- That they are in compliance with the Unruh Civil Rights Act.
- That they are in compliance with the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA).
- That any policy they have against any sovereign peoples recognized by the government of the United States, including, but not limited to, the nation and people of Israel, is not used to discriminate in violation of the Unruh Civil Rights Act or the FEHA; any policy adopted by a person or actions taken thereunder that are reasonably necessary to comply with federal or state sanction laws or laws affecting sovereign nations or their nationals shall not be construed as unlawful discrimination in violation of the Unruh Civil Rights Act or the FEHA. (Cal. Pub. Contract Code, § 2010.)

Existing law requires the Insurance Commissioner to request and obtain information from insurers licensed and doing business in California regarding any records of slaveholder insurance policies issued by any predecessor corporation during the slavery era. (Ins. Code, § 13810.)

Existing law requires the Insurance Commissioner to obtain the names of any slaveholders or slaves described in certain insurance records and make the information available to the public and the Legislature. (Ins. Code, § 13811.)

Existing law requires each insurer licensed and doing business in California to research and report to the Insurance Commissioner with respect to any records within the insurer's possession or knowledge relating to insurance policies issued to slaveholders that provided coverage for damage to, or death of, their slaves. (Ins. Code, § 13812.)

Existing law provides that descendants of slaves, whose ancestors were defined as private property, dehumanized, divided from their families, forced to perform labor without appropriate compensation or benefits, and whose ancestors' owners were compensated for damages by insurers, are entitled to full disclosure. (Ins. Code, § 13813.)

Existing law provides that every person who, having taken an oath that he or she will testify, declare, depose, or certify truly before any competent tribunal, officer, or person, in any of the cases in which the oath may by law of the State of California be administered, willfully and contrary to the oath, states as true any material matter which he or she knows to be false, and every person who testifies, declares, deposes, or certifies under penalty of perjury in any of the cases in which the testimony, declarations, depositions, or certification is permitted by law of the State of California under penalty of perjury and willfully states as true any material matter which he or she knows to be false, is guilty of perjury. (Pen. Code, § 118, subd. (a).)

Existing law provides that any person who, in any affidavit taken before any person authorized to administer oaths, swears, affirms, declares, deposes, or certifies that they will testify, declare, depose, or certify before any competent tribunal, officer, or person, in any case then pending or thereafter to be instituted, in any particular manner, or to any particular fact, and in such affidavit willfully and contrary to such oath states as true any material matter which they know to be false, is guilty of perjury. In any prosecution, the subsequent testimony of such person, in any action involving the matters in such affidavit contained, which is contrary to any of the matters in such affidavit contained, shall be prima facie evidence that the matters in such affidavit were false. (Pen. Code, § 118a.)

Existing law makes perjury a felony, punishable by imprisonment for two, three, or four years in the county jail. (Pen. Code, § 126.)

This bill finds and declares all of the following:

- Numerous American businesses across various industries, including, but not limited to, insurance, banking, tobacco, cotton, sugar, railroads, and shipping, reaped substantial profits by exploiting the uncompensated labor of enslaved persons. Consequently, these businesses and the individuals managing them directly profited from the labor of enslaved persons or directly benefited from insurance policies that insured enslaved persons. This intertwining of economic interests highlights the extent to which the exploitation of enslaved persons permeated the foundation of various American industries. However, very few American industries and the underlying businesses and individuals have adequately acknowledged their connection to the enslavement era.
- Many California residents and descendants of enslaved persons and their ancestors were defined as property, dehumanized, separated from their families, coerced into performing labor without appropriate compensation or benefits, assaulted and abused. Enslaved

persons were treated as chattels in every sense of the word, including being used as collateral for insurance policies, loans, and other transactions, and in some instances, their ancestors' owners were compensated for damages by insurers.

- Insurance policies from the enslavement era, which have been discovered in the archives of several insurance companies, document insurance coverage to slaveholders for damage to or the death of enslaved persons. In some cases, existing insurance firms or their predecessor firms issued these policies. These insurance policies, loan documents, and other documents and records provide evidence of ill-gotten profits from slavery. Slaveholders and those involved in the slave trade, in turn, profited from the uncompensated labor of enslaved persons, even if such profits have long been redistributed to shareholders. Industries that profited in this manner may include, but not be limited to, capitalized insurers, financial services providers, textile companies, tobacco companies, railroad companies, shipping containers, the sugar industry, and entities in other industries whose successors in interest remain in existence today.
- The citizens of California, which include descendants of enslaved persons, are entitled to complete transparency regarding any involvement or profits acquired through slavery by companies seeking to conduct business in California. This disclosure is essential to ensure that the community is informed about the historical connections and practices of the companies operating within its jurisdiction fostering a culture of accountability and responsible business practices. This provision is a call to the companies who participated in slaveholding and the slave trade to acknowledge and address the enduring impacts of the enslavement era on our society, and to promote responsible corporate leadership.
- It is essential for corporations to recognize their historical connections to the enslavement era and take responsibility for any past actions that have contributed to the perpetuation of unfairness and harm. By actively engaging in redress efforts, corporations demonstrate their commitment to fostering a more just and fair society. Remedying the harms resulting from the enslavement era is not only a moral imperative but also a crucial step towards ensuring a cohesive and inclusive community. This provision serves to facilitate corporate transparency and accountability, and to encourage the implementation of concrete measures aimed at alleviating the long-lasting adverse effects of the slave trade on descendants of enslaved persons.
- The full disclosure of the facts and acknowledgement of the depth and scope of the participation in slaveholding and the slave trade and public hearings with respect thereto furthers the public interest by recognizing the dignity of enslaved persons and descendants and promotes healing in the California community for enslaved persons, descendants, and those who participated in slaveholding or the slave trade.

This bill provides that the purpose of the section added to the Civil Code by this bill is to do all of the following:

- Promote the investigation of any participation in slaveholding or the slave trade by companies or contractors engaging in business in California.
- Establish a system whereby full and accurate disclosure of company or contractor records related to participation in slaveholding or the slave trade are made publicly available, and which provides an opportunity for public notice.
- Establish a governance structure to collect affidavits and enforce the provisions of the section.

This bill defines the following terms:

- “Department” means a department to be determined.
- “Doing business in the state” has the same meaning as in Section 23101 of the Revenue and Taxation Code.
- “Financial company” includes, but is not limited to, any bank in which the state deposits public funds and investment managers.
- “In-state entities” means any business or enterprise that is doing business in the state, as defined in the Revenue and Taxation Code.
- “Related entities “ means both of the following:
 - The in-state entity’s parent entities or subsidiaries that do business in the state.
 - A predecessor in interest, regardless of whether that predecessor did business in the state.

This bill requires each in-state entity with annual worldwide gross receipts that exceed \$100 million to complete an affidavit, under penalty of perjury, verifying that it has searched through any and all records in its and its related entities possession, control, and knowledge for records that the in-state entity or its related entities bought or sold persons subjected to slavery, used persons subjected to slavery as collateral, provided loans to purchase persons subjected to slavery, insured transactions or the persons subjected to slavery, or provided related or other services to aid or otherwise facilitate those transactions.

This bill requires the affidavit to include all of the following:

- The names of each slave and slaveholder described in the records.
- Evidence of transactions that benefited or otherwise profited from slavery in the United States.
- To the extent applicable, records from 1849 onward indicating all of the following:
 - Insurance policies related to slaveholding.
 - Evidence of purchase, sale, or lease of enslaved persons.
 - The use of enslaved persons as collateral for insurance policies, loans, or other transactions.
 - Evidence of the provision, or receipt, of loans to purchase enslaved persons.
 - Insuring transactions for enslaved persons.
 - Any other company or contractor records evidencing participation in slaveholding or participation in the slave trade.
- A statement from the in-state entity verifying that it has exercised due diligence to search through any and all records in its entities’ possession.

This bill requires the affidavit to be submitted by one of the following dates:

- For in-state businesses doing business in the state as of January 1, 2027, by July 1, 2027.
- For in-state entities commencing business in the state following January 1, 2027, within 60 days of commencement of business within the state.

This bill requires an in-state entity to submit an updated affidavit to the department upon the discovery of new reportable information.

This bill requires the department to do all of the following:

- Provide by January 3, 2028, a public digital platform.
- Following creation of the database, make affidavits and reports received available on the platform within 30 days of receipt.
- Update the platform with information required under 9) within 30 days that the new information and data are available.
- Notwithstanding any other law, ensure that all affidavits, reports, information, and data remain indefinitely on the platform.

This bill requires the public digital platform to make all of the following available in an understandable and accessible manner:

- A database of all affidavits and reports received, with the ability to view individual affidavits and reports.
- All reported information disaggregated based on a variety of data points, including, but not limited to, all of the following:
 - Company type.
 - Multiyear review of data.
 - Company value.
 - Estimated value or revenue gained in the time period of the slavery-related transactions or business.

This bill provides that the Attorney General may bring an action for injunctive relief for a violation of the above provisions.

This bill provides that nothing shall limit remedies available for a violation of any other state or federal law.

This bill adds, to the list of certifications that must be made, under penalty of perjury, by a person that submits a bid or proposal, or otherwise proposes to enter or renew a contract with, a state agency with respect to any contract in the amount of \$100,000 or more, that, if they are an in-state entity with annual worldwide gross receipts of over \$100 million, they have submitted an affidavit in compliance with the above provisions.

COMMENTS

1. Need for This Bill

According to the author:

AB 2599 focuses on transparency and accountability. If corporations benefited from slavery, the public deserves to know. This bill ensures we uncover those truths and make that information accessible to all Californians.

2. California Transparency in Supply Chains Act

For more than a decade, the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act (CTSCA) has required large retailers and manufacturers to disclose their efforts to eradicate slavery and human trafficking from their supply chains. The CTSCA applies to retail sellers or manufacturers doing

business in the state of California with annual worldwide gross receipts in excess of \$100,000,000.¹ Companies subject to the CTSCA must disclose to what extent they:

- Engage in verification of product supply chains to evaluate and address risks of human trafficking and slavery. The disclosure shall specify if the verification was not conducted by a third party.
- Conduct audits of suppliers to evaluate supplier compliance with company standards for trafficking and slavery in supply chains. The disclosure shall specify if the verification was not an independent, unannounced audit.
- Require direct suppliers to certify that materials incorporated into the product comply with the laws regarding slavery and human trafficking of the country or countries in which they are doing business.
- Maintain internal accountability standards and procedures for employees or contractors failing to meet company standards regarding slavery and trafficking.
- Provide company employees and management, who have direct responsibility for supply chain management, training on human trafficking and slavery, particularly with respect to mitigating risks within the supply chains of products.

The CTSCA focuses on modern-day slavery, with less emphasis on historical ties and profiting from U.S. slavery-era transactions.

3. California Reparations Task Force

While many of California's businesses were founded long after the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, California also has many businesses which directly, or through the acquisition of older companies, profited from slavery or from business activities arising from slavery, such as writing insurance policies for slaveholders.

In 2000, the Legislature enacted SB 2199 (Hayden, Ch. 934, Stats. 2000), which required the Insurance Commissioner to request and obtain from insurers licensed in California records in their possession indicating that the company, or any predecessor entity, provided coverage to slaveholders for damage to enslaved persons.² SB 2199 also required the Insurance Commissioner to make the names of all enslaved persons and slaveholders, and a report on the records received from insurers, publicly available.³ The list and report are currently available on the California Department of Insurance's website.⁴ In its first three years of implementation, "...the California Department of Insurance received reports from at least eight companies, three of which supplied 690 records of insurance policies. New York Life Insurance Company supplied 488 policy records (71 percent of the total); American International Group, Inc. (AIG) supplied 173 (25 percent), and Aetna supplied 29 (4 percent)...Most policies were sold in the upper south states of Kentucky, North Carolina, and Virginia."⁵ The data collected from SB

¹ State of California, Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General (2026). *The California Transparency in Supply Chains Act* <https://oag.ca.gov/SB657>

² Ins. Code, § 13810.

³ Ins. Code, §§ 13810, 13811, 13812.

⁴ California Department of Insurance (2026). *Slavery Era Insurance Registry* <https://www.insurance.ca.gov/01-consumers/150-other-prog/10-seir/>

⁵ Scholarly Publishing Collective, Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation (April 2025) *Review: California Slavery Era Insurance Registry* <https://scholarlypublishingcollective.org/msup/jsdp/article/6/1/68/399990/Review-California-Slavery-Era-Insurance-Registry>

2199, as well as from myriad other sources continues to be used in public facing record repositories.⁶

Thereafter, the California Reparations Task Force process began to document the role that public and private institutions, including corporations, played in systems of enslavement and racial exploitation.⁷ This was an important first step in acknowledging the harm and exploitation that generated substantial wealth while also inflicting generational economic and social harm. However, that work primarily focused on cataloguing the harm suffered, with less attention given to the institutions that benefited from those systems and the profits earned from the chattel slavery system.⁸

4. Perjury

Perjury occurs when a person, having taken an oath that they will speak honestly before a tribunal, officer, or person, states as true any material matter which they know to be false. (Pen. Code, § 118, subd. (a).) Perjury applies not only to the described testimony but also to written sworn affidavits. (Pen. Code, § 118a.) It is a felony punishable by two, three, or four years of imprisonment in a county jail. (Pen. Code, § 126.)

It is not a defense to perjury that the person accused was not competent to give the testimony of which the falsehood is alleged. (Pen. Code, § 122.) It is also not a defense to perjury that the person accused did not know the materiality of the false statement or did not know the effect that the false statement could have. (Pen. Code, § 123.) A person cannot be convicted of perjury if the proof of their perjury rests solely upon the testimony of one other person. (Pen. Code, § 118, subd. (b).)

5. Enhanced Sentencing and Deterrence

Research shows that increasing the severity of punishment does little to deter crime. According to the National Institute of Justice, an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, “[l]aws and policies designed to deter crime by focusing mainly on increasing the severity of punishment are ineffective partly because criminals know little about the sanctions for specific crimes. More severe punishments do not ‘chasten’ individuals convicted of crimes, and prisons may exacerbate recidivism... Studies show that for most individuals convicted of a crime, short to moderate prison sentences may be a deterrent but longer prison terms produce only a limited deterrent effect. In addition, the crime prevention benefit falls far short of the social and economic costs.”⁹

6. Constitutional Protections

The Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution protects the right of people to be secure in their persons, property, and documentation from unreasonable searches and seizures unless permitted by warrants upon probable cause. Analogously, Article 1, Section 13 of the California Constitution declares that:

⁶ Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation, Enslaved, Peoples of the Historical Slave Trade (2026). *Visualize Data* <https://enslaved.org/explore/visualizations/>

⁷ AB 3121 (Weber) Ch. 319, Stats. of 2020.

⁸ California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans (2022). *Final Report* <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/full-ca-reparations.pdf>

⁹ National Institute of Justice (May 2016). *Five Things about Deterrence* <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/247350.pdf>

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects against unreasonable seizures and searches may not be violated; and a warrant may not issue except on probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons and things to be seized.

A search occurs when the government physically intrudes upon an enumerated area or invades a protected privacy interest, for the purpose of obtaining information. (*Patel v. City of Los Angeles* (9th Cir. 2013) 738 F.3d 1058.) The U.S. Supreme Court affirmed in *Agnello v. United States* that searches conducted without warrants have been held unlawful “notwithstanding facts unquestionably showing probable cause” (*Agnello v. U.S.* (1925) 269 U. S. 20.) *Katz v. U.S.* further emphasized that searches and seizures without a warrant issued by a judge or magistrate are considered to be unreasonable when a right to privacy is involved. (*Katz v. U.S.* (1967) 389 U.S. 347, 357.) An individual’s subjective expectation of privacy is one that society is prepared to recognize as reasonable. (*Smith v. Maryland* (1979) 442 U.S. 735, 740.)

If a disclosure requirement is a search, the next question is if a search is reasonable. (*Small Bus. Ass’n of Mich. v. Yellen* (W.D.Mich. 2025) 769 F. Supp. 3d 722.) The Fourth Amendment is not violated if it is objectively reasonable for the search or seizure to be conducted. (*Florida v. Jimeno* (1991) 500 U.S. 248, 250.)

Government regulators have broad discretion when investigating compliance; commercial entities do not have a right to conduct their affairs in secret and have weaker 4th Amendment rights than individuals. (*United States v. Morton Salt Co.* (1950) 338 U.S. 632, 652-53.) In general, with corporate disclosure, courts are often concerned about the release of data that could be adversely used by law enforcement, triggering concerns about self-incrimination, a 5th Amendment right. (*Romero v. Commissioner of the IRS* (E.D.Cal. Dec. 15, 1998, CV-F-98-6284 OWW SMS) 1998 U.S.Dist.LEXIS 20494; *David H. Tedder & Assocs. v. United States* (9th Cir. 1996) 77 F.3d 1166; *United States v. Bisceglia* (1975) 420 U.S. 141.) However, mandated corporate disclosures are subject to 4th Amendment privacy protections if noncompliance with the disclosure incurs civil or criminal penalties. (*California Bankers Association v. Shultz* (1974) 416, U.S. 21, 65-66.) The U.S. Supreme Court set forth a reasonableness standard for reporting requirements like those imposed here; it requires the information sought to be (i) “sufficiently described,” (ii) “limited in nature,” and (iii) “sufficiently related to a tenable congressional determination,” analogous at the state level to legislative finding that is supported in fact and law. (*Id.* at 67.)

Here, a court may find that the records are sufficiently described by the text of AB 2599, limited in nature as they are finite historical records, and that California has a legislative history of disclosing ill-gotten gains from slavery. This bill does not require the government to review all of a commercial entity’s internal records; this bill does require a commercial entity to attest under penalty of perjury that, after an internal review, they have released all required records to the public. While this bill does make private identifying information public, the information is likely about deceased individuals. Certain companies have voluntarily made disclosures that they have profited from slavery, highlighting a lessened socially recognized privacy expectation.¹⁰

¹⁰ The Guardian (Jan. 2005) *Bank admits it owned slaves*
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/jan/22/usa.davidteather>; AP News (July 2023) *Citigroup says some*

Unfortunately, jurisprudence regarding the public release of privately owned records is less developed than jurisprudence regarding the collection of private records by government regulators or the release of public records. Further, releasing the names of enslaved people and enslavers, and any privacy interests that their living relatives may have, is something partially mandated by SB 2199 (Hayden) Ch. 934, Stats. of 2000, that has not been litigated.

7. Effect of This Bill

California does not currently require standardized disclosure of verified historical ties to slavery or related economic activity. As a result, information remains fragmented, inconsistent, or inaccessible to the public. Transparency regarding historical practices is essential to responsible governance and ethical business standards.

This bill imposes corporate disclosure requirements for commercial conduct relating to enslavement that is similar to, but more expansive than, SB 2199 (Hayden) Ch. 934, Stats. of 2000. Specifically, this bill requires all entities doing business in California, across all industries, with over \$100 million in annual worldwide gross receipts to complete an affidavit, by January 1, 2027, that does all of the following:

- Verifies that the entity has searched through any and all records in its, or its related entities', possession, control, and knowledge for records that the entity or related entities bought or sold persons subjected to slavery, used persons subjected to slavery as collateral, provided loans to purchase persons subjected to slavery, insured such transactions or the persons subjected to slavery, or provided related or other services or otherwise facilitated those transactions.
- Includes the names of each slave and slaveholder described in the records.
- Includes evidence of transactions that benefitted or otherwise profited from slavery in the United States and, to the extent possible, records from 1849 forward indicating insurance policies related to slaveholding; evidence of purchase, sale, or lease of enslaved persons; the use of enslaved persons as collateral for insurance policies, loans, or other transactions; evidence of the provision, or receipt, of loans to purchase enslaved persons; insuring transactions for enslaved persons; and any other company or contractor records evidencing participation in slaveholding or participation in the slave trade.
- A statement from the in-state entity verifying that it has exercised due diligence to search through any and all records in its and its related entities' possession.

If a new entity begins doing business in the state after January 1, 2027, it must provide the affidavit, information, and documents described above within 60 days of the commencement of in-state business. If an in-state entity learns of new reportable information, it must provide an updated affidavit.

The bill requires the affidavits set forth above to be submitted to a state department that has yet to be determined. The department is tasked with compiling the information provided and, by January 3, 2028, reporting on the information to the Legislature and making the information publicly available on a digital platform that can be disaggregated based on a variety of data points. The digital platform must be updated to reflect new information received. The bill also

requires companies to certify that they are in compliance with the disclosure requirements as a condition of bidding for a public contract over \$100,000.

Because the affidavits are signed under penalty of perjury, this bill creates a felony, punishable by up to four years of imprisonment. California has, in general, moved away from increased incarceration as studies show that punitive measures are often ineffective.

8. Similar Legislation

The City of Los Angeles requires that any company that enters a contract with it attests that the company has searched all its records for profits derived from slavery and disclosed those records, as specified.¹¹ In 2005, the City of Oakland enacted the Slavery Era Disclosure Ordinance that required disclosure from insurance companies and financial services providers.¹²

Illinois is currently hearing that Enslavement Redress Act, which requires each contractor that participates in a competitive bid with the State to review its records for evidence of the contractor's or a related party's participation in slaveholding or the slave trade and to make certain disclosures with respect to that participation, contains provisions concerning notice of public hearings following the disclosures, provides that the Illinois Office of Equity shall appoint an administrator to oversee the program, provides that each contractor that has disclosed participation in slaveholding or the slave trade shall provide the State with a statement of financial redress at the time of submitting its bid, and contains provisions creating a Redress Fund.¹³

9. Argument in Support

According to the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights:

AB 2599 is a critical piece of legislation that builds on the work of the California Reparations Task Force which began the historical process of identifying harm at the state level. Since then, this research has expanded through local commissions who are also identifying the role local governments played in slavery, as well as subsequent racial violence and discrimination. This research at the government level, has been a significant first step in acknowledging the harm and exploitation of African Americans which has generated substantial wealth, and inflicted lasting economic and social harm. It is, however, missing acknowledgement and disclosure of the role and benefit to companies who owned and profited from the labor of slaves. .

Corporations have a moral and ethical responsibility to conduct business practices in alignment with human rights. It is important that we acknowledge the financial

¹¹ City of Los Angeles (2003) *Los Angeles Charter § 10.41.2, added by ord. No. 175,346, eff. 8-16-03*
https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/los_angeles/latest/laac/0-0-0-60142

¹² City of Oakland (2005) *Code of Ordinances, Chapter 9.60 – Slavery Era Disclosure, § 9.60.010, Ord. 12686*
https://library.municode.com/ca/oakland/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT9PUPEMOWE_CH9.60SLERDI

¹³ Illinois General Assembly (2026) *Bill Status of HB 1227*
<https://www.ilga.gov/Legislation/BillStatus?DocNum=1227&GAID=18&DocTypeID=HB&SessionID=114&GA=104>; National African-American Reparations Commission (Jan. 2025) Illinois Introduces Landmark Slavery Disclosure & Redress Bill, Press Conference Set for January 28 <https://reparationscomm.org/reparations-news/landmark-slavery-disclosure-and-redress-act-introduced-in-illinois/>

benefit gained from businesses with historical ties to human trafficking and slavery. This legislation is building on current disclosure laws and transparency efforts like the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act (CTSCA) which already requires certain companies to disclose their efforts to eradicate slavery and human trafficking from their supply chains. Current disclosure laws are primarily focused on modern-day slavery, but transparency regarding historical practices is also essential to informed public dialogue, responsible governance, and ethical business standards.

We believe that repair for descendants of U.S. chattel slavery and the larger African American community as a group, begins with naming and admitting the harm done. This is in accordance with the principle of Satisfaction as defined by the United Nations (UN), which requires acknowledgment, public disclosure, and apology for the harm.

Harm cannot be repaired unless and until one acknowledges that it occurred. AB 2599 supports the ongoing historical effort in California to tell true history and acknowledge the historical and ongoing impacts of slavery.

10. Argument in Opposition

According to the American Council of Life Insurers:

On behalf of the organizations listed below, we respectfully submit our continued opposition to AB 2599 unless it is amended to address the concerns outlined in this letter.

We recognize and appreciate the Legislature's longstanding interest in ensuring transparency regarding any historical connections between insurance companies and the slave trade. In 2000, the Legislature addressed this issue through SB 2199 (Hayden), which was supported by organizations including the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the NAACP, and the Rainbow PUSH Coalition. That legislation required insurers doing business in California to investigate and report any records of slave-era insurance policies.

SB 2199 resulted in a comprehensive report to the Legislature and the public. The findings were compiled and published by the California Department of Insurance, and the report remains publicly available on the Department's website today. As a result of that statutory process, insurers have already complied with California law requiring disclosure of historical slave-era insurance policies.

As currently drafted, AB 2599 appears to require reporting that substantially overlaps with the work already completed pursuant to SB 2199 and codified in CA INS 13810. To avoid duplicative reporting requirements while preserving the transparency goals previously established by the Legislature, we respectfully request that the bill be amended to recognize compliance with the existing statute. Specifically, we ask that AB 2599 be amended to add a new subparagraph (e) in 1714.44:

(e) Compliance by an insurance company with California Insurance Code Division 3, Chapter 5, Slavery Era Insurance Policies, Section 13810 et seq. shall be deemed full compliance with this section.

This amendment would ensure that companies that have already complied with California's existing statutory reporting framework are deemed to have satisfied the requirements contemplated by AB 2599. We also note that the Assembly Judiciary Committee analysis dated April 14 characterized this as a "reasonable request." It is plainly in the state's interest for insurers to devote their resources to the business of insurance and, where they have already complied with analogous legal requirements, to have a clear safe harbor from duplicative mandates. At the same time, if an insurance carrier has not complied with Insurance Code Section 13810, nothing in this amendment would limit the application of AB 2599 to that insurer.

-- END --