



September 21, 2017

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor of the State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: SB 225 (Stern) -- SUPPORT and AB 260 (Santiago) -- SUPPORT

On behalf of the Hollywood Chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), I urge you to sign into law, Assembly Bill 260 (Santiago) and Senate Bill 225 (Stern), which the California Legislature passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. The dual measures, co-sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women-CA, the Conference of California Bar Associations, and the California National Organization for Women represent another important step to battle human trafficking in California.

In 2012, the National Council of Jewish Women-CA co-sponsored the original bill to create a human trafficking notice with the human trafficking hotline number and have since engaged in community-wide distribution of the posters and awareness campaigns throughout the state. These bills, SB 225 and AB 260, are needed enhancements to the current law.

AB 260

Data collected from the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) indicates that hotels and motels are prime locations for human trafficking. Victims of human trafficking are often forced to stay in hotels or motels where customers either come to them or they are required to go to rooms rented out by the customers. Victims can also be forced to work in hotels or motels by corrupt subcontracting companies or can be part of sales crews forced to sell products from city to city and reside in hotel/motel rooms while on the road. These arrangements are often unbeknownst to hotel management.

California law requires certain businesses and establishments to post a notice with information on human trafficking resources, including national and statewide hotlines. Each year, the National Human Trafficking Hotline yields thousands of cases (7,572 cases in 2016 alone) with usage going up consistently each year. Notices must be posted near the entrance of the establishment in clear view of the public and employees, in both English and Spanish or any other language widely spoken in the county. Under current law, hotels and motels are not required to post this notice despite the high frequency of trafficking occurring in these locations.

AB 260 simply adds hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts to the list of the businesses



already required to post the notice. These life-saving notices will provide victims of human trafficking with crucial information that can lead to rescue and follow-up services and will also increase awareness about trafficking among hotel staff and the public. We need these businesses to be part of the watchful community to stop human trafficking.

SB 225

Anti-trafficking advocates and law enforcement have recently reported the need to update the DOJ's notice to inform the public that they can text, in addition to call, the hotline numbers for assistance. Given modern advances in telecommunications, texting has become not only a more common form of communication among California's population, but also a preferred means of communication to protect victims and witnesses of human trafficking. For trafficking victims who find themselves in situations where their abuser is in the next room, or just a few steps away, texting is many times the only option for their safety and confidentiality. SB 225 would require the DOJ to revise the notice to include the option of texting, in addition to calling the state and national hotlines for assistance.

Human trafficking is a global scourge and a multibillion-dollar criminal enterprise in California. SB 225 and AB 260 build on California's leadership in fighting human trafficking by making the human trafficking hotline more accessible and its availability more prominent at hotels and motels, creating greater opportunity for victim reporting and rescue.

I urge you to sign SB 225 and AB 260 into law.

Thank you,

John Erickson
President
Hollywood NOW

cc. Claire Lipschultz, ncjwcaclaire@gmail.com,
National Council of Jewish Women-CA