



COALITION TO
ABOLISH SLAVERY
& TRAFFICKING

Transparency in Supply Chains, Ethical Recruitment, and Slavery-Free Procurement A Three-Pronged Strategy to Prevent Human Trafficking in California

There is broad public and political consensus that human trafficking is an urgent crisis that demands action. Yet, with the sclerosis in Washington, we cannot expect meaningful federal action in the short term. Innovative strategies to combat human trafficking must come from the state level and then be replicated in other states or at the federal level in future years. California, and Los Angeles specifically, are the ideal laboratories for developing these new strategies.

California's economy is larger than all but four countries, and Los Angeles has the world's third largest metropolitan economy. Because L.A. has the largest port in the Western Hemisphere, and because many of the state's primary industries (agriculture, trade, tourism, textiles) are commonly implicated in trafficking, it is a recognized hotspot for modern-day slavery.

California is well positioned to enact cutting edge legislation that impacts the business community, a feat that would likely be impossible elsewhere. Because of the tireless work of advocates and the large scale of the issue in California, state and local elected leaders are now committed to aggressive anti-trafficking action. Governor Brown and a coalition of state legislators championed eight new anti-trafficking laws that were enacted in October 2018, and Mayor Garcetti and the Los Angeles City Council have substantially expanded lines of funding to serve homeless trafficking victims among other actions. And, leaders at the city and state level have expressed an openness to further action.

To seize this opportunity, CAST is planning to make a three-year investment in its state-level advocacy capacity. With \$150,000 in new funding, we will hire a Senior Policy Specialist for a three-year fellowship focused on passing and implementing legislation in California to compel business to take more action to prevent sex and labor trafficking. The Specialist will write, advocate for, and consult on the implementation of key pieces of policy at the California level, and will work with our existing policy staff as well as with the trafficking survivors that we have trained and organized as advocates through our Survivor Advisory Caucus.

Legislative Priorities

The Senior Policy Specialist will be advancing three key legislative priorities:

- **Supply Chain Transparency:** Passed in 2010, SB 657 (the Transparency in Supply Chains Act) made California a leader in eradicating slave labor from supply chains. As a result of the legislation, consumers gained new information about companies' efforts to combat trafficking in their supply chains, which empowered them to make better purchasing decisions. Though SB 657 has had a tremendous impact on eradicating trafficking from supply chains, CAST seeks to pass a set of updates and technical fixes that will keep the law relevant in a changing economy. Additionally, we have a number of recommendations for the State of California to improve its implementation of the bill. Given its close relationship with the Attorney General's Office, CAST hopes to partner as

a Co-Author on updates to this bill in 2019 or 2020.

- **Ending Fraudulent Recruitment:** Foreign recruitment agents are one of the most well-worn paths into labor trafficking. Luring economically vulnerable people from around the world with false promises of steady work and fair pay, these agents use recruitment fees and uncertain immigration status to prey upon victims who have little power in their home countries and even less in the U.S. In 2014 California passed a first-of-its-kind piece of legislation requiring foreign labor contractors to adopt a “zeros fees” policy for workers and register with the California Labor Commission. Unfortunately, though this bill that was designed to cover the 150,000 temporary workers that come to California annually (one-fifth of the temporary workers in the country), due to a drafting error it has been interpreted to cover only 3,000 workers, making the protections in this bill all but defunct and impossible to implement. CAST is working to pass a technical fix to this bill, ensuring its effective implementation in California so that it can serve as the model for the United States as it was originally designed.
- **Slavery-Free Procurement for California:** During the Obama era, there was a major push at the federal level that put strong protections into place to prevent any products tainted by trafficked labor from being purchased through federal procurement processes. Legislation adopting this standard for California Procurement would greatly increase the impact of the federal government efforts as California spends nearly \$10 billion in procurement annually. Enacting a procurements policy would have a massive impact both in terms of specific purchases, but also in terms of applying pressure to companies seeking to maintain their business with the state. CAST has had draft legislation prepared in this area for almost four years but has not had the capacity to sponsor this bill to date.

In the case of each of these three priorities, there are three potential phases of work: crafting/updating legislation; advocating for legislation to be passed; and intensive consulting with California agencies on implementation upon passage of each of the bills.

Organization Overview

The Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (CAST) is one of the pioneers of the US anti-trafficking movement. Founded in 1998 in response to the discovery of 72 Thai workers that had been kept for years in slavery and debt bondage in Los Angeles County, the organization has been at the forefront of the issue in Los Angeles, California, and across the U.S. Today, through partnerships with over 100 cultural and faith-based community groups, healthcare organizations, government agencies and law enforcement, CAST provides support at every phase of a human trafficking victim's journey to becoming an empowered survivor.

CAST's policy and advocacy work is led by Policy & Legal Services Director Stephanie Kay Richard, Esq. Ms. Richard has been involved in the anti-trafficking movement for over 10 years, during which time she has been named a Fellow for a New California (Rockwood Leadership Institute's program for immigrant rights leaders), and served as the domestic lead for ATEST and the policy Co-Chair of the Freedom Network, USA, two national U.S.-based coalitions working to improve federal and state anti-trafficking laws and the implementation of these laws. Ms. Richard graduated summa cum laude from American University, Washington College of Law, where she was the recipient of a public interest/public service scholarship.