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February 16, 2021

The Honorable Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
Capitol Building, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Cristina Garcia
Chair, Assembly Budget Sub 5
Capitol Building, Room 2013
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Request for \$10 Million to Assist Human Trafficking Survivors during COVID-19

Dear Chairpersons Ting and Garcia,

The undersigned legislators respectfully request the Assembly Budget Committee to appropriate \$10 million in one-time funding to ensure human trafficking survivors receive specialized, evidence-based support services. This one-time funding is needed to address the specific health and safety needs of human trafficking survivors in California during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As economic conditions worsen due to COVID-19, labor and sex trafficking victims currently being trafficked are facing increasingly unsafe, harsh, and exploitive conditions. High unemployment rates are producing an increase in the number of individuals recruited into sex and labor trafficking daily. Since trafficking survivors are unlikely to have access to traditional social safety nets, especially during the pandemic, it is important that we commit necessary resources to reach this vulnerable community.

Throughout California, human trafficking services are being strained as the need for specialized trafficking services has dramatically increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, California's largest human trafficking service provider, the Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking, has seen a 400% increase in food and housing assistance, as well as a 185% increase in emergency response services provided to trafficking survivors during the pandemic compared to the same period in 2019. According to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline, the highest number of reports of human trafficking come from California.¹ Los Angeles and the Bay Area, in particular, are amongst the highest hotspots for

¹ California Human Trafficking Fact Sheet, Center for Public Policy Studies. February 2013
<http://www.htcourts.org/wp-content/uploads/CA-HT-Fact-Sheet-2.27.13.pdf?Factsheet=HT-CA>

human trafficking in the state. Funding to support survivors in need will run out unless the legislature acts to provide additional support. Many human trafficking organizations in California simply will not be able to sustain this increased level of needed services without an increase in state funding.

We respectfully urge the Assembly Budget Committee to appropriate \$10 million in one-time funding to the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to distribute to current service providers assisting those who have been trafficked. Should you have any questions, please call Assemblymember Santiago's office at (916) 319-2053.

Sincerely,



MIGUEL SANTIAGO
Assembly Member, 53rd District



ASH KALRA
Assembly Member, 27th District



TASHA BOERNER HORVATH
Assembly Member, 76th District



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Assembly Member, 13th District