

# Cast

COALITION TO  
ABOLISH SLAVERY  
& TRAFFICKING

# Cast Policy Report

2022-2023

## IMPACT STATEMENT

By 2025, CAST will create a bridge between practice and policy, where survivors are empowered and resilient, and working with practitioners to inform a survivor-centered policy agenda. This survivor centered strategy leads to powerful systematic changes in, attitudes, actions and resources to end human trafficking.

## Advocacy and Education

Cast works year-round to ensure legislators, government agencies, and other stakeholders are informed and empowered to pursue evidence-based anti-trafficking policies that uphold a human rights and public health approach.

In April 2022, Cast staff and survivor leaders Dunia Zelaya and Jimmy Gomez provided expert testimony for the Select Committee on Streamlining Services for Victims of Interpersonal Violence Informational Hearing: Overview of Child Sex and Labor Trafficking in California.

In June of 2022, we urged the G7 to address forced labor, including actions to address the exploitation of refugees, displaced people, migrant and informal workers, women, children and other marginalized groups.

In February of 2023, Cast held a press conference on the West Steps of the Capitol Building in Sacramento to announce our policy package and bring awareness to the fight against human trafficking in California.

In October of 2023, Cast provided expert testimony for the Little Hoover Commission's Lookback hearing on their 2020 series of labor trafficking reports. This hearing will focus on Commission reports in two areas: labor trafficking and intimate partner violence. This lookback hearing is intended to allow the Commission to revisit critical issues and recommendations discussed in its past reports and to understand where progress has been made and what reforms are still needed:

### Little Hoover Commission Sparks Progress on Key Issues, But More Needs to be Done

In November of 2023, Assemblymember Jennifer Kim visited the Cast team and transitional shelter to learn more about how our policy work and budget requests translate to our direct client services.

Cast raised awareness of forced criminality with the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, asking for a focus on services for victims, rather than convictions. Cast spoke about human trafficking at two town halls, provided non-stereotyped messaging in advance of the Superbowl, and provided survivor feedback to the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs on posters that businesses are required to post in workplaces.

Cast signed onto several letters to advocate for protecting sex trafficking survivors' right to restitution, open trade data transparency, the protection of immigrant rights, and the dismissal of charges of survivors acting in self-defense.

Cast policy staff spoke to VALORUS about media representations of human trafficking and common myths:

[Leigh LaChapelle on the anti-trafficking movement: how television and movies can harm and help the field](#)

## Funding

**Cast works year-round to ensure that human trafficking service providers in California receive adequate funding for critical services.**

In June of 2021, the California Legislature passed Cast's \$30 million request to fund human trafficking service providers over the three years. This \$30 million provided emergency funding for survivors of human trafficking amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath to ensure survivors in every part of the state have a place to go for safety, support, and services. This additional \$30 million came at a time when numbers of urgent human trafficking cases were at an all-time high. The existing \$10 million per year of on-going state funding to human trafficking service providers is not enough to handle the continued escalating needs of survivors and their families. To allow California to be a leader in fighting the spread of human trafficking, we must strategically allocate resources to provide for a multi-disciplinary approach to services and prevention.

Accordingly, in 2022/2023 Cast requested \$33 million per year in funding over the next three years that will holistically address the needs of survivors including permanent housing, non-carceral outreach, legal services, and more.

Through the [Budget Act](#) of 2023, Cast secured \$27 Million for three years

- The Budget Act also allocated \$10 million from Cast's 2021 Budget Act funding to be allocated in year 1.
- Human trafficking service providers across California will receive \$27 million for one year and \$17 million for each of the two years following.

In the fall of 2023, Cast and several partners formed the VOCA Advocacy Alliance to push for protection of crime victim services at both the federal and state levels. In November, the Alliance held a "lobby day" in Sacramento and met with legislators to urge them to take action.

[Urgent action needed to save critical services for crime victims](#)

## State Legislation

### Sponsored Legislation Signed into Law:

#### **SB 584:** (Jones) Resource Family Approval Program

This bill expands resource family training to include child labor trafficking education for foster parents who care for children who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing, human trafficking.

#### **SB 376:** (Rubio) Right to an Advocate

Grants survivors the right to have a human trafficking advocate and a support person of their choosing present at any interview by law enforcement authorities, prosecutors, or defense attorneys.

#### **AB 1261:** (Santiago) - Immigrant Rights Act

Codifies the procedures for S visas and clarifying procedures for U and T visas and gives clear guidance to law enforcement/ prosecutors on the requirements and factors that are not required for a U, T, or S Visa to be issued.

#### **SB 727:** (Limon) - Civil Actions

Allows a pathway for survivors to have debts that are the result of their trafficking cleared with credit reporting agencies.

### Sponsored Legislation not Signed into Law:

#### 2022

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**AB 2553**, to establish the California Multidisciplinary Alliance to Stop Trafficking (“CAMAST”) to strengthen California’s efforts to combat human trafficking.

Assemblymember Tim Grayson and the Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking Introduce Comprehensive Bill to Combat California’s Human Trafficking Crisis

#### 2023

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**AB 235**, would establish the Labor Trafficking Unit within the Civil Rights Department to receive, investigate, and prosecute complaints alleging labor trafficking and take steps to prevent it. The Unit would also coordinate with the various state departments and follow protocols to ensure survivors of labor trafficking are not victimized by the process of prosecuting traffickers and are informed of the services available to them.

**AB 1149**, to establish the California Multidisciplinary Alliance to Stop Trafficking (“CAMAST”) to strengthen California’s efforts to combat human trafficking. While California has made significant

strides in serving victims and survivors of trafficking, additional resources and legislation are needed to position California as a global leader in the anti-trafficking movement. By requiring the CAMAST to provide recommendations to strengthen efforts to combat trafficking, examine collaborative models, and evaluate the state's progress, AB 1149 will help California to be a model for best practices in the global fight against human trafficking.

## Supported Legislation Signed into Law:

### **SB 357:** (Senator Winer), the Safer Streets for All Act

This bill repealed a California law that allowed police to engage in discriminatory policing of Black, Brown and transgender communities especially. This law was being used to criminalize and punish survivors based on race, gender and sexual orientation. Read more about how this law will help to prevent human trafficking:

[CA's Loitering Law Is Actively Harmful to Trafficking Survivors](#)

[A non-carceral approach to trafficking: Unpacking California's Safer Streets for All Act](#)  
[Statement in Response to a Group of San Diego County Mayors Calling for the Repeal of SB 357](#)

Cast was nominated for the Freedom United "[For Freedom Impact Award](#)" in 2022 and 2023 for our work in helping survivors convicted of loitering to clear their names and rebuild their lives.

### **SB 459:** (Senator Rubio) Domestic violence: restraining orders

This bill requires judicial council to create a new domestic violence-labeled form, which will clarify existing law allowing victims to modify an active restraining order.

## Supported Legislation not Signed into Law:

### 2022

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**AB 2790**, Centering Survivor Safety and Health Act, which would modernize California's medical mandatory reporting statute in order to better protect survivors of domestic and sexual violence, and ensure their ability to access vital health care services.

**SB 1003**, which would create the Trauma-Informed Care Training Program under the State Department of Public Health for the purpose of approving Trauma-Informed Care Training providers and certifying training programs. Cast is the nation's largest human trafficking victim services provider and is committed to tackling the societal barriers that make individuals vulnerable to human trafficking.

**AB 2534**, The Survivor Support and Harm Prevention Pilot Program Act, which would pilot the creation of non-carceral options for survivors of violence and crime to access services that do not mandate engagement with law enforcement or the criminal legal system.

**AB 2169** seeks to ensure non-citizens receive the full protections intended under the law by clarifying the basis for vacatur, which will help undo the ongoing harm that non-citizen victims of trafficking, intimate partner and/or sexual violence experience when they are criminalized as a result of their abuse. AB 2169 will ensure that non-citizen survivors, like their citizen counterparts, are able to use vacatur remedies to eliminate all of the ongoing consequences of legally invalid convictions.

ACLU's budget request of \$147 million one-time General Fund money for a pilot program to support five to ten housing programs for unhoused and housing insecure current and former sex workers that includes connections to culturally competent services.

## 2023

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**AB 1084**, the Bilingual Oriented Social Equity Services (BOSES) Grant Program Act. This bill will authorize the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to distribute grant funding to community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide their direct service staff bilingual pay.

**AB 1497**, which would guarantee that survivors have a chance for their experiences to be heard during legal proceedings as well as a chance to rebuild their lives. Specifically, this bill would:

- Prevent the unjust conviction of victims who survived contexts of abuse, coercion, and exploitation through an expanded affirmative defense.
- Allow judges and jurors to consider an individual's relevant mental health diagnosis and treatment in more cases, broadening key decision-makers' understanding of each individual and their unique circumstances.
- Permit judges to consider survivors' experiences when making sentencing decisions, allowing for the opportunity for healing and family reunification.
- Ensure that no survivors of abuse, coercion, and exploitation are excluded from forms of post-conviction relief that allow survivors a fresh start including access to employment, housing, education, and other opportunities.

**AB 1726**, is a technical fix to SB 357 and 2017's SB 239 to ensure that the record clearing provisions enacted by SB 357 and SB 239 also work for purposes of immigration relief. AB 1726 ensures that vulnerable immigrant populations can benefit from the reforms that resulted from repealing Penal Code sections 647f and 653.22.

**AB 1028**, which would center survivor safety and health by limiting mandatory requirements for healthcare providers to notify law enforcement of a broad range of adult violent injuries. The bill will mandate that survivors of domestic and sexual violence get offered a referral and warm handoff to community-based and national advocacy services.

**ACA 8**, which will prohibit slavery in any form, including forced labor compelled by the use or threat of physical or legal coercion. Cast is fighting to stop labor trafficking across all industries in California and

stands against the legal labor trafficking occurring in the prison system. Incarcerated people deserve to work in conditions that respect their dignity and rights, alongside all workers in our state. More than 150 years after slavery was outlawed in the US, California remains one of many states that allow slavery and indentured servitude as a punishment for a crime in its state constitution. ACA 8 will ensure that California is a global leader in the fight against human trafficking and labor exploitation.

## Federal Legislation

Since the Trafficking Victims Protection Act 2000, Cast has been an integral voice in advocating for equitable funding for survivors, the inclusion of labor trafficking in laws, and shifting policies from criminalization to prevention during each reauthorization of the bill.

Cast's National Survivor Network (NSN) held an Informational Congressional Briefing in collaboration with ATEST and Freedom Network USA:

### Historic Capitol Hill Briefing by Experts with Lived Experience

#### **H.R.2601: National Human Trafficking Hotline Enhancement Act**

Cast signed on to a letter to Congress to oppose a proposed change to the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline's operating procedures to require the Hotline to report all tips about adult human trafficking to law enforcement.

Cast supported the NSN's work in opposing this bill:

### National Survivor Network, HR2601 Opposition Campaign

The NSN's advocacy was instrumental in Democratic author Sheila Jackson Lee understanding the harms of the potential bill.

## Cast Endorsed Federal Bills:

#### **H.R.8672: Trafficking Survivors Relief Act of 2022 (Representative Owens)**

This bill would give survivors a path to clear their federal criminal records of non-violent offenses committed as a result of their trafficking.

#### **S.3065: Fair Day in Court for Kids Act of 2023 (Senator Hirono)**

This bill would provide unaccompanied children legal counsel in immigration proceedings.

**S.3585: A bill to amend title 9, United States Code, with respect to arbitration of disputes involving human trafficking. 2023 (Senator Blumenthal)**

Last year, Congress banned employers from utilizing forced arbitration for sexual assault or harassment disputes. This bill would expand that law to include human trafficking disputes

**S.2349**: the Jimmy Deal Trafficking Survivors Assistance Act of 2023. (Senator Cortez Masto)

This bill will assist trafficking survivors who lack government issued identification in accessing air travel, and for other purposes by establishing the position of Trafficking Survivor Point of Contact within the Transportation Security Administration at every airport.

**(H.J.RES.72) (S.J.RES.33)** - Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to prohibit the use of slavery and involuntary servitude as a punishment for a crime. (Representative Williams) (Senato Merkley)

## Local Advocacy

### Housing

In May of 2023, Cast wrote to the Budget, Finance and Innovation Committee of Los Angeles to request that the Mayor's budget on Homelessness and Housing prioritize survivors of domestic violence who are at risk of becoming homeless, by continuing to support funding for the Crisis to Shelter Program (CTS).

### Human Rights Approach

The LA County Board of Supervisors passed a motion on adopting a coordinated public health approach in October of 2023.

#### Reimagining Los Angeles County's Approach to Human Trafficking

Cast submitted a written letter of support and provided in-person testimony.

#### Cast Letter to Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

### Victims of Crime Act

LA City Council (authored by Councilwoman Yaroslavsky) passed a motion in support of our VOCA Budget Request.

LA Board of Supervisors (MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN and HILDA L. SOLIS) in support of our VOCA Budget Request.

## 13th Amendment Advocacy:

LA County Board of Supervisors passed a motion at Cast's request to support state and federal legislation to end forced labor in prisons:

- [Board Motion](#)
- [Cast Support Letter](#)

### **This Motion sets out to:**

Instruct the Chief Executive Office - Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch (CEO-LAIR) to support S.J.Res.33 (Merkley), H.J.Res. 72 (Williams), ACA 8 (Wilson), which would prohibit the use of slavery and involuntary servitude as a punishment for a crime.

Direct CEO-LAIR to take the appropriate legislative advocacy actions to advance this effort, including opportunities to not only increase labor standards and job training opportunities for incarcerated individuals, but also to transform mandatory community service into economic opportunities rather than forced labor.

Direct the Department of Economic Opportunity and the Justice Care and Opportunities Department, with the Sheriff and the Probation Department, to report back to the Board in 180 days with a written landscape analysis of the workforce within the Los Angeles County Jails and those on Probation, as well in-reach job training and education programs. The report back should include:

- Work performed by incarcerated individuals, and the wages earned, if applicable;
- All job training programs currently offered and their outcomes
- All educational programs currently offered and their outcomes; and
- Accounting of mandatory or voluntary community service programs and their requirements.