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Governor Newsom Must Provide Specific Funding for Human Trafficking Victims When He Provides Budget Augmentation for those Most at Risk

(LOS ANGELES, CA) – Today, the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (Cast) released the following statement in response to Governor Newsom’s coronavirus-related announcement:

“We applaud Governor Newsom for his commitment to at-risk youth, particularly foster children, during the pandemic. However, this narrowly focused investment will not adequately protect all Californians who are at heightened risk for human trafficking due to COVID-19. We must take action now for all the truly vulnerable and invisible, including undocumented immigrants, immigrants on temporary visas, unaccompanied immigrant children, and homeless youth and adults,” said Kay Buck, CEO of Cast.

“While the world is essentially on hold due to the pandemic, human trafficking is not. In fact, we expect higher rates of trafficking as we’ve seen before in the aftermath of natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina and the 2010 Haiti earthquake. There we saw increased forced labor in construction, and we can expect to see the same in other essential industries in California such as nursing, elder care, and in our food supply chains. Further, higher rates of unemployment and shelter-in-place orders cause trafficked victims to suffer abuse longer as they are now even more bonded to their exploiters, who often control victims by providing housing and other basic necessities. We can save thousands, if not more, by immediately expanding resources for organizations on the ground who can prevent human trafficking before it starts, confirming lines are open for reports of employment exploitation and abuse, and ensuring that the first responders continuing to provide safe havens and specialized services for those to flee to during and after the pandemic are adequately prepared for the expected influx in cases,” concluded Buck.

About the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking

[The Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking](http://www.castla.org) (Cast) is a Los Angeles–based nonprofit organization working to put an end to modern slavery and human trafficking through comprehensive, life-transforming services to survivors and a platform to advocate for groundbreaking policies and legislation. To find out more, visit www.castla.org or follow Cast on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).