

Cast

COALITION TO
ABOLISH SLAVERY
& TRAFFICKING

CAST 2024 POLICY REPORT

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The Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (Cast) is the largest comprehensive service provider in the U.S., working to put an end to human trafficking through holistic services for survivors and a platform to advocate for groundbreaking policies and legislation. 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.

2024 IMPACT OVERVIEW

\$103 MILLION IN FUNDING

Secured for victim service providers throughout California

CONSTITUTIONAL ADVOCACY

Cast was a co-sponsor of [ACA 8](#) (Wilson) - Ending Forced Labor and Making Communities Safer, which was passed by the California Legislature and placed on the November Ballot.

Cast endorsed [Measure A](#) to

ADVANCE AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SOLUTIONS,

which was passed by Los Angeles voters in November.

3 CO-SPONSORED BILLS SIGNED INTO LAW:

- [AB 2432](#) (Gabriel) - Funding Victims Services Through Corporate Accountability
- [AB 2224](#) (Santiago) - Special Immigrant Juvenile Justice Act
- [SB 963](#) (Ashby) - Human Trafficking Prevention Act: Enhancing Emergency Responses to Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence

3 SUPPORTED ORDINANCES AND MOTIONS PASSED IN LOS ANGELES:

- [The Sanctuary Ordinance](#) will protect immigrants.
- [Developing a Countywide Strategy for Addressing Encampments After Grants Pass](#), will push back against the criminalization of homelessness.
- [The Fair Wage Ordinance](#), will provide increased wages, resources, and training for hospitality workers.

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT CAST'S POLICY ADVOCACY IN 2024

LOCAL

Advocacy & Education

- Cast led efforts to advance a human rights and public health approach to combating human trafficking through its recommendations to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors: "Reimagining Los Angeles County's Approach to Human Trafficking"

Why? The human rights and public health approach focuses on addressing the root causes of trafficking while protecting survivors' dignity and autonomy. This approach prioritizes prevention through social support and equitable policies rather than punitive measures. In these recommendations, Cast highlighted the criminalization of survivors, particularly its disproportionate impact on BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities, as a critical issue requiring systemic change. We advocated for trauma-informed, non-carceral solutions that focus on reducing vulnerabilities across individual, community, and societal levels. Cast's recommendations included addressing intersecting issues like homelessness, immigration, and mental health, promoting ethical research, and forming a Countywide Human Trafficking Coordinating Unit with survivor leadership and diverse representation to ensure policies reflect the lived realities of affected communities.

- Cast signed onto a [letter](#), led by the LA Language Access Workgroup, to advocate for the prioritization of language justice in the Los Angeles City Budget.

Why? Language access is a critical justice issue for survivors of human trafficking, ensuring they can access legal, medical, and support services without barriers. Without interpretation or translation, survivors face isolation and are often unable to advocate for their rights or navigate complex systems. Cast advocates for language access to uphold survivors' dignity, remove systemic inequities, and foster trust between communities and service providers. Access to justice and resources should not be determined by language proficiency.

- Cast gave feedback to the [Board of Police Commissioners](#) as Los Angeles prepares to host the Olympics and World Cup.

Why? Cast has worked through the years to challenge the perpetuation of the "Superbowl myth," which falsely claims that sex trafficking surges during major sporting events. Cast emphasized that this narrative distracts from the realities of trafficking, wastes resources in unhelpful places, and leads to harmful policing practices, including the arrest and re-traumatization of survivors through 'sting operations'. Through this feedback, Cast advocated for evidence-based, trauma-informed approaches that prioritize community-based support, survivor-led outreach, and systemic solutions over punitive enforcement measures.

Motions + Ordinances + Measures

- **ENDORSED/PASSED:** [Measure A](#) to Advance Affordable Housing and Solutions in Los Angeles.

Why? Housing insecurity is both a key risk factor and a common result of human trafficking. At Cast, housing is one of the top reported needs of survivors seeking our services. Increasing funding for affordable housing solutions is a critical tool in prevention and response to human trafficking.

- ▶ Read more: [The Intersection of Homelessness and Human Trafficking: Why Cast Strongly Supports Measure A](#)

→ **SUPPORTED/PASSED:** [The Sanctuary Ordinance](#) prohibits Los Angeles City resources from being utilized for immigration enforcement or for cooperation with federal immigration agents.

▶ Read the [Motion](#)

Why? As one of the nation's oldest and largest service providers for survivors of human trafficking, we see firsthand how collaboration with immigration enforcement undermines public safety and trust. Many survivors we serve are undocumented or have mixed-status families, which makes the threat of detention and deportation a weapon that traffickers use to silence and control them. Instead of protecting our communities, partnerships and information sharing with immigration enforcement perpetuate harm and criminalization. By limiting cooperation and preventing city resources from being used for immigration enforcement, this ordinance ensures that Los Angeles is a place where survivors feel safe to come forward, seek justice, and rebuild their lives. The Sanctuary Ordinance is a vital step toward creating a city that protects human rights, values dignity, and refuses to be complicit in perpetuating exploitation.

→ **SUPPORTED/PASSED:** LA County Board of Supervisors motion [Developing a Countywide Strategy for Addressing Encampments After Grants Pass](#), pushed back against the Supreme Court ruling that cities are no longer prohibited from criminalizing homelessness even if no shelter beds or other resources exist.

Why? The criminalization of homelessness exacerbates the vulnerabilities that lead to human trafficking. Policies that penalize unhoused individuals for surviving perpetuate cycles of poverty, discrimination, and exploitation. By rejecting punitive approaches, the city can focus on expanding supportive housing, services, and policies that prevent trafficking and address systemic inequities. This aligns with Cast's commitment to addressing vulnerabilities that lead to trafficking through holistic, survivor-centered solutions.

→ **SUPPORTED/PASSED:** [The Fair Wage Ordinance](#) will provide increased wages, greater access to healthcare, workplace protections, and critical safety and anti-trafficking training for LAX and hotel workers.

- ▶ [Tourism Workers Rising One Pager](#)
- ▶ Read the [Motion](#)

Why? We know that poverty is a key risk factor for human trafficking. Workers whose wages don't keep pace with the rising cost of housing are especially vulnerable to victimization. To effectively combat human trafficking, we must prioritize increased resources and robust workplace protections for vulnerable workers. These measures are not just necessary—they are critical in preventing exploitation.

STATE

Advocacy + Education

→ Human Trafficking Awareness Month Legislator Education Day

Why? Cast traveled to Sacramento to meet with legislators, advocate for human rights and public health policy, and ask that they join the fight to support survivors and prevent human trafficking.

→ #JustSolutions Press Conference

▶ “We are asking the state of California to stop saying it cares about survivors and start investing in the support survivors actually need.” -Leigh LaChapelle

Why? The press conference was hosted by ACLU Cal Action, Californians for Safety and Justice, Ella Baker Center, and Smart Justice California to call on state policymakers to focus on solutions that work to ensure Californians’ safety and wellbeing. Organizations across California have called on our legislature to counter the broader efforts to double down on criminalization and mass incarceration – which inevitably mean wasting precious state resources that could be better spent on housing, health care, schools, services for victims, and programs that reduce recidivism and promote accountability beyond incarceration. Cast spoke about the barriers that criminalization creates for survivors and the necessity of fully funding direct support services.

→ In coalition with organizations throughout California working on important bills, Cast participated in organizing educational briefings for legislators and their staff in Sacramento on pressing issues:

▶ “Moving Past Politics and ‘Perfect’ Victims: How California Fails Survivors” educated legislators about the way survivors of human trafficking are criminalized and the barriers this creates for long term healing.

- ▶ “Centering Survivor Safety and Health” educated legislators on the harms of non-consensual law enforcement reporting in medical settings and how to best create legislation that centers health and autonomy.

- Cast is a member of the **California VOCA Advocacy Alliance**, which consists of statewide organizations dedicated to supporting survivors of crime, advocates, and their communities. Our large coalition works to advance the rights of survivors of trafficking, child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, and others. With a common goal to advocate for our communities, we center equitable access to victim services in our decisions.

Why? The federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) is the largest funding source for victims’ services throughout the country. These funds support nearly 400 organizations in California responding to the needs of survivors of child abuse, elder abuse, human trafficking, domestic violence, sexual assault, and more. Federal funds have diminished significantly and organizations like Cast are facing cuts up to 45% in available funding. If California doesn’t act, organizations across the state will be forced to reduce critical programming, increase their wait times, lay off staff, or even close their doors entirely. We will see thousands of survivors unable to access vital care.

- ▶ “For those wanting to “do something,” the solution is clear and unequivocal: adequately fund the essential community-based services that provide life-saving support to survivors. While debates ensue about whether the federal government or the State should bear the responsibility for ensuring consistent VOCA funding levels, it is ultimately the survivors and their families who will pay the steep price of inaction.” - Kay Buck, CEO
 - [Learn more from Cast’s CEO Kay Buck](#) on the ongoing VOCA crisis

- Cast attended the First Partner’s Gender Equity Summit and raised awareness about the criminalization of survivors and the resulting impacts on the health and safety of our communities and advocated for non-carceral interventions.

Sponsored Budget Requests:

→ **CO-SPONSORED/PASSED:** Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Budget Request (Reyes)

- ▶ Secured \$103 Million in funding for victim service providers in California.
- ▶ **Co-Sponsors:** California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, Children’s Advocacy Centers of California, Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (Cast), The Culturally Responsive Domestic Violence Network, Legal Aid Association of California (LAAC), Los Angeles LGBT Center, The LGBTQ Center of Long Beach, and ValorUS® (VALOR)

Why? The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) is crucial to human trafficking service providers because it provides essential funding to support comprehensive, trauma-informed services for survivors, including shelter, legal aid, counseling, and case management. These funds enable providers to address the unique needs of trafficking survivors, helping them rebuild their lives and access justice while ensuring long-term stability and safety.

→ **CO-SPONSORED/DIDN'T PASS:** TRACE Study - Trafficking Research and Analysis to Counter Exploitation (Bonta)

- ▶ \$3.25 million to support a two-year, one-time prevalence study to look at labor AND sex trafficking in Alameda and Los Angeles County.
- ▶ **Co-Sponsors:** Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking, Asian Americans Advancing Justice So-Cal
- ▶ Support [Letter](#)

Why? Research is needed to fill critical gaps in understanding the scope of human trafficking in California. This would be the first study to comprehensively examine both sex and labor trafficking, ensuring a holistic view of the issue. This would also be the first study to offer materials in multiple languages, prioritizing accessibility and reaching communities often excluded from research. Additionally, its survivor-centered approach would ensure meaningful engagement of individuals with lived experience at all stages, providing valuable insights to shape effective anti-trafficking policy and practice.

Sponsored Bills:

→ **CO-SPONSORED/PASSED:** [AB 2432](#) (Gabriel) - Funding Victims Services Through Corporate Accountability

- ▶ This bill will create a new revenue source that will provide ongoing funding for crime victim services in California. The bill does so by holding bad corporate actors accountable for financial and legal wrongdoing.
- ▶ **Co-sponsors:** California Attorney General, California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, Children’s Advocacy Centers of California, Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (Cast), The Culturally Responsive Domestic Violence Network, Legal Aid Association of California (LAAC), and ValorUS® (VALOR)

▶ [Factsheet](#)

Why? Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds are the backbone of human trafficking service providers, rape crisis centers, domestic violence shelters, and LGBTQ+ services across California. This bill will create a permanent funding stream that will insulate these programs from federal funding fluctuations.

→ **CO-SPONSORED/ DIDN’T PASS:** [AB 1956](#) (Reyes) – Crime Victim Services Stabilization Act

- ▶ This bill would have required the state to fill in for VOCA funding if the amount awarded in a year is 10% or more lower than the year prior.
- ▶ **Co-Sponsors:** California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, Children’s Advocacy Centers of California, Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (Cast), The Culturally Responsive Domestic Violence Network, Legal Aid Association of California (LAAC), Los Angeles LGBT Center, The LGBTQ Center of Long Beach, and ValorUS® (VALOR)

▶ [Factsheet](#)

Why? Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds are essential for human trafficking service providers, rape crisis centers, domestic violence shelters, and LGBTQ+ services across California. This bill would have ensured that the California Legislature was responsible for continuing funding for these providers in the case of insufficient federal funding.

- **CO-SPONSORED/DIDN'T PASS:** [AB 1832](#) (Rubio) - Civil Rights Department: Labor Trafficking Task Force
 - ▶ This bill would have established a labor trafficking unit within the Civil Rights Department.
 - ▶ **Co-Sponsor:** Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (Cast)
 - ▶ [Factsheet](#)

Why? Despite high rates of human trafficking in our state, there is no specific California State entity that is responsible for responding to labor trafficking. This bill would have positioned the state to take a coordinated approach to the prevention and investigation of labor trafficking while working to protect these survivors from criminalization by informing them of their rights and connecting them to appropriate social and legal services.

- **CO-SPONSORED/PASSED:** [AB 2224](#) (Santiago) - Special Immigrant Juvenile Justice Act
 - ▶ This bill requires important procedural changes that combat lengthy backlogs related to court filing for immigrants petitioning for special immigrant juvenile status (SIJS).
 - ▶ **Co-Sponsors:** Bet Tzedek, Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (Cast), Immigrant Legal Resource Center, and Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice.
 - ▶ [Factsheet](#)

Why? Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) benefits human trafficking survivors by providing a legal pathway to stability and safety for those under 21 who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected by one or both parents. Many trafficking survivors are minors who lack familial protection and face deportation, making them vulnerable to re-trafficking or exploitation. By securing SIJS, survivors can access lawful permanent residency in the U.S., which allows them to pursue employment, education, and support services without fear of removal.

→ **CO-SPONSORED/DIDN'T PASS:** [AB 3127](#) (McKinnor) – Centering Survivor Health and Safety: Mandated Reporting

▶ This bill:

- 1. Requires connection to support: This bill would have ensured that survivors of violence who are seeking healthcare are offered a connection to domestic and sexual violence advocacy services. Additionally, providers in emergency departments and acute care settings would be required to offer assistance to the patient in accessing a medical evidentiary exam or reporting to law enforcement, in addition to making a connection to anti-violence advocates, for all violent injuries.
- 2. Reform mandated reporting: The bill would have limited the injuries that healthcare providers are required to report to law enforcement to firearm injuries and other life-threatening injuries caused by violence. (And would maintain reporting for injuries caused by child or elder abuse). As AB 3127 would require that life-threatening injuries caused by violence still be reported, this bill was a more measured approach compared to previous versions.

- ▶ **Co-Sponsors:** the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking Culturally Responsive Domestic Violence Network, Futures Without Violence, the Los Angeles LGBT Center, and the UCI Domestic Violence Law Clinic.

▶ [Community Info Sheet](#)

▶ [Learn more about how non-consensual law enforcement reporting harms survivors.](#)

Why? AB 3127 takes a trauma-informed approach to survivor care by connecting survivors of violence with advocacy services while ensuring access to medical evidentiary exams or law enforcement support when they choose. By reforming mandated reporting to focus on life-threatening and firearm injuries, this bill would have reduced the risks of retraumatization and criminalization that can occur when law enforcement is engaged non-consensually. These harmful practices discourage survivors from seeking essential medical care and exacerbate existing barriers to safety and recovery.

- **CO-SPONSORED/DIDN'T PASS:** [AB 2354](#) (Bonta) – Justice for Survivors: Vacatur Relief
 - ▶ This bill would have allowed survivors to access vacatur relief for all offenses, including violent offenses, that result from their trafficking.
 - ▶ **Co-Sponsors:** California Coalition for Women Prisoners, California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, Californians for Safety and Justice, Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking, Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, Felony Murder Elimination Project, Free to Thrive, Immigrant Legal Resource Center, Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice, National Center for Youth Law, Rainbow Services, Ltd., San Francisco Public Defender’s Office, Sister Warriors Freedom Coalition, and Survived & Punished.
 - ▶ [Factsheet](#)

Why? Vacatur relief is a legal remedy that allows survivors of human trafficking to have convictions for crimes they were forced to commit erased from their records. This process acknowledges that these individuals acted under coercion and helps remove barriers to housing, employment, and other opportunities caused by their criminal history. By clearing their records, vacatur enables survivors to rebuild their lives without the lasting stigma of convictions for acts they did not commit voluntarily. Expanding vacatur relief to include violent felonies recognizes that trafficking survivors are often coerced into committing such offenses under threat of harm or death, leaving them with convictions that unjustly punish them for their victimization. By allowing vacatur for these cases, the law can provide a path to justice and recovery for survivors who are factually innocent, removing barriers to rebuilding their lives and breaking cycles of exploitation.

- **CO-SPONSORED/PASSED:** [SB 963](#) (Ashby) - Human Trafficking Prevention Act: Enhancing Emergency Responses to Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence
 - ▶ This bill would require all emergency departments to develop a self-identifying system for survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence.
 - ▶ **Co-Sponsors:** California Medical Association, Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking, San-Francisco Safe House

▶ [Factsheet](#)

Why? Increasing tools for healthcare providers to support survivors of human trafficking is critical because healthcare settings are often one of the few places survivors interact with professionals who can offer help. Empowering healthcare professionals with tools like self-identification systems can help them connect survivors to vital resources. This approach not only enhances early intervention but also aligns with public health goals by addressing the physical and mental health needs of an underserved population.

Sponsored Constitutional Amendments

- **CO-SPONSORED/PASSED:** [ACA 8](#) (Wilson) - Ending Forced Labor and Making Communities Safer
 - ▶ California’s Constitution permits slavery, otherwise known as “involuntary servitude,” as punishment for a crime. Through ACA-8, the legislature was able to place Proposition 6 on the November 2024 ballot, seeking to close this loophole and prohibit the state from using forced labor. While ACA-8 successfully passed in the legislature, [Proposition 6](#) ultimately did not pass in the election.
 - ▶ **Co-Sponsors:** <https://aclucalaction.org/bill/aca-8/>

Why? Cast is unwaveringly committed to eradicating labor trafficking, whether it exists on farms, in sweatshops, or within our governmental institutions. As a society, we must unequivocally uphold human dignity as the standard in our government and criminal justice system. We cannot effectively combat forced labor and sexual violence in the world until we decisively address the injustices happening within our own institutions. [Learn more about Cast’s perspective.](#)

Supported Bills

- **SUPPORTED/PASSED:** [AB 2136](#), will remove legal barriers to establishing more drug checking programs in the state. It provides much needed legal protections for drug checking providers and participants.

Why? This bill aligns with Cast’s commitment to public health and harm reduction strategies that prevent human trafficking and exploitation. Drug checking programs allow individuals to test substances for harmful contaminants, such as fentanyl or other adulterants, helping to prevent overdoses and reduce substance-related harm. By removing legal barriers to these programs and providing protections for providers and participants, AB 2136 fosters safer communities and addresses vulnerabilities that traffickers often exploit, such as substance dependency. This bill is a step toward empowering individuals, reducing exploitation, and creating a safer, more equitable system of care.

- **SUPPORTED/DIDN’T PASS:** AB 2155 (Ting), the Bilingual Oriented Social Equity Services (BOSES) Grant Program. This bill would have authorized the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to distribute grant funding to community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide their direct service staff bilingual pay.

Why? This bill promotes equitable access to services by enabling community-based organizations to offer bilingual pay to their staff. This funding supports language access, critical for building trust and providing trauma-informed care to diverse survivors of human trafficking.

- **SUPPORTED/DIDN’T PASS:** SB 1126 (Min), would have clarified mandated reporting law to ensure that domestic violence survivor parents and their children can stay together where they are best able to achieve safety and receive support instead of being put at risk for separation from their children because they have experienced abuse.

Why? This bill would have prioritized the safety and well-being of domestic violence survivors and their children by clarifying mandated reporting laws. This bill would have ensured families can remain together while accessing critical support services, preventing unnecessary separations that can exacerbate trauma and hinder recovery.

- **SUPPORTED/DIDN’T PASS:** AB 2924 (Petrie-Norris), would have set the marriage age in California at 18, no exceptions to the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

Why? This bill aligns with efforts to prevent exploitation, reduce forced child marriages, and ensure that all individuals enter marriage with full legal and personal autonomy.

- **SUPPORTED/DIDN'T PASS:** AB 2200 (Kalra), would have began the process of creating a universal single-payer system of health care for every California resident. CalCare would have guaranteed comprehensive health care and would achieve health care justice for all.

Why? This bill represents a critical step toward achieving health care justice and ensuring universal access to comprehensive, guaranteed health care for all California residents. This aligns with Cast's commitment to addressing systemic inequities that disproportionately impact survivors of human trafficking, many of whom face barriers to necessary medical care. A single-payer system would have helped remove those barriers and provide the stability survivors need to rebuild their lives.

Supported Constitutional Amendments

- **SUPPORTED/DIDN'T PASS:** [ACA 10](#), a measure which would have defined adequate housing as a fundamental human right in California and required state and local governments to "respect, protect, and fulfill" this right through progressively implemented measures, to the maximum of available resources.

Why? Recognizing adequate housing as a fundamental right in California's Constitution is essential to addressing the housing crisis and preventing the vulnerabilities that lead to exploitation and trafficking. Stable housing is a cornerstone of safety and recovery for survivors, and this amendment reflects a necessary commitment to protecting human rights and dignity for all Californians.

Opposed Bills

- **OPPOSED/DIDN'T PASS:** [AB 2034 \(Rodriguez\)](#), a measure that would have made it a misdemeanor to loiter in a public place with the 'intent to commit prostitution.'

Why? While we share the goals of improving community safety and ending human trafficking, this bill would have harmed survivors of trafficking by adding further trauma to their experience and leaving them with criminal records that hinder their ability to develop safe and independent survival systems. AB 2034 would have allowed law enforcement to engage in discriminatory policing that targets women of color, immigrants, and members of the transgender community. Arrest is not an ethical means of outreach, intervention, or linkage to services.

- Read more about why Cast originally supported the Safer Streets for All Act, which decriminalizes loitering with intent.
- <https://acluaction.org/2021/08/cas-loitering-law-is-actively-harmful-to-trafficking-survivors/>
- <https://www.freedomunited.org/unpacking-safer-streets/>

FEDERAL

Advocacy & Education

- Cast signed onto a letter requesting the Office of Management and Budget take urgent action to prevent further catastrophic cuts to the Crime Victims Fund (CVF), and to fully restore the critical and necessary funding needed for the Victims of Crime Act (“VOCA”) victim service grants program.

Why? Without federal action, survivors of crime who rely on community-based services funded by VOCA will be left without a safe place to go.

- Cast signed on to testimony from Worth Rises submitted for the U.S. Senate Judiciary – Subcommittee on Criminal Justice and Counterterrorism, chaired by Abolition Amendment lead sponsor Senator Booker, who held a hearing on [“An Examination of Prison Labor in America”](#).

Why? We cannot effectively combat forced labor and sexual violence in the world until we decisively address the injustices happening within our own institutions. We must end the exception in the Thirteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution that allows slavery and involuntary servitude to be used “as a punishment for crime.” and prioritize dignity for incarcerated workers and their loved ones.

- Cast submitted public comment to urge the Office for Victims of Crime to ensure incarcerated survivors and their family members have access to the same services and benefits that are available to survivors in the community

Why? Criminal records act as indelible marks on survivors, blocking access to opportunities for healing and stability. Denying incarcerated survivors or those with criminal records access to victims’ compensation and benefits compounds their trauma, exacerbating cycles of violence, poverty, and exploitation. Cast strongly advocates for unrestricted access to victims’ compensation

and benefits, ensuring that no survivor is penalized for the circumstances of their exploitation.

→ Supporting Immigrant Survivors:

- ▶ Naturalization Funding: Cast urged Congressional Appropriations Committee leaders to allocate funding to the USCIS Citizenship and Integration Grant program, which supports the naturalization of immigrants.
- ▶ T Visa Regulation: Cast joined efforts to push the Department of Homeland Security to finalize the long-awaited T Visa regulation, which is vital for providing protection to survivors of human trafficking.
- ▶ Legal Representation: Cast advocated for funding for guaranteed legal representation for immigrants in deportation proceedings, underscoring the need for fair and equitable access to legal resources.
 - The Fairness to Freedom Campaign, led by the Vera Institute for Justice and the National Partnership for New Americans, advocates for establishing a universal right to federally funded representation for anyone facing deportation who can't afford it. We urged the Appropriations Committee to allocate funds to address critical gaps in legal representation for noncitizens in removal proceedings in the Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations funding bill.
- ▶ Visa Processing Backlog: Cast advocated for \$500 million in FY 2025 funding for USCIS to address the visa processing backlog and another \$100 million for implementing electronic processing systems to improve efficiency.
- ▶ Work Authorization: Cast urged the Department of Homeland Security's ("DHS") and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services ("USCIS") to take immediate action to issue work authorization to as many qualified applicants as possible before the end of this administration. Issuing work permits now will ensure immigrants are able to power our economy for years to come.

- ▶ Equity in Applications: Cast called on USCIS to rescind Controlled Application Review and Resolution Program (CARRP) immediately and fairly apply the same immigration laws and regulations to all aspiring Americans - people who have every right to live in the United States and have worked hard to build lives here.

Why? Cast's commitment to advocating for immigrant survivors is unwavering and unchanged. We will continue to fight for access and work to hold federal systems accountable.

Endorsed Bills

- **ENDORSED/ONGOING:** [H.R. 8061](#) (Wagner) & [S.4514](#) (Durbin and Murkowski) - [Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act of 2024](#)
 - ▶ This legislation redirects unobligated funds collected through the False Claims Act to ensure that crime victim service providers across the nation funded by VOCA can keep their doors open.
 - ▶ [Learn more about this critical legislation.](#)

Why? Without federal action, survivors of crime who rely on community-based services funded by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) will be left without a safe place to go.

- **ENDORSED/ONGOING:** [S.4887](#) (Cardin) - Continued Presence Improvement Act
 - ▶ This legislation will:
 - Allow state and local law enforcement to request Continued Presence (CP) for a survivor,
 - Provide for continuous extension of CP until the T Visa adjudication or appeals process is completed,
 - Allow for deferred action and employment authorization for family members of CP recipients,
 - Authorize USCIS to provide work authorization rather than requiring a separate law enforcement request for work authorization,
 - Clarify that a civil action is an independent basis for CP.

Why? Continued Presence (CP) is a vital immigration tool that provides temporary legal status to survivors of human trafficking, offering protection from deportation and work authorization. It grants survivors stability, enabling them to focus on recovery while accessing critical services like housing, medical care, and counseling. Additionally, CP often serves as a bridge to longer-term immigration relief, such as T Visas, ensuring survivors can build a future free from exploitation. This resource is essential for empowering survivors and strengthening anti-trafficking efforts.

Opposed Bills

→ **OPPOSED/ONGOING:** [H.R. 7909](#) (Mace) - Violence Against Women by Illegal Aliens Act

- ▶ This legislation would expand the circumstances under which domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, stalking, and sex offenses would constitute grounds of inadmissibility, as well as expand the definition of domestic violence to be considered for inadmissibility or deportability grounds.

Why? These proposed measures would negatively impact immigrant survivors of domestic and sexual violence and fail to alleviate the primary barriers to safety and stability experienced by survivors seeking relief under the Immigration and Nationality Act.

→ **OPPOSED/DIDN'T PASS:** [H.R. 2601](#) (Lee) - National Human Trafficking Hotline Enhancement Act

- ▶ This legislation would have transformed the National Human Trafficking Hotline into a law enforcement tip line.

Why? A hotline that automatically reports all cases of human trafficking to law enforcement undermines survivor trust and can deter them from seeking help, as it compromises confidentiality and may lead to unintended consequences such as deportation or criminalization. This approach shifts the focus away from addressing survivors' immediate needs—such as shelter, medical care, and emotional support—toward a law enforcement response that may not

align with their safety needs. Many survivors, particularly undocumented individuals or those with a criminal record, may fear retaliation or further harm from engaging with law enforcement. Additionally, this practice does not align with the standards utilized by other national sexual assault or domestic violence hotlines, which aim to prioritize a trauma-informed, survivor-centered approach that works with the caller to determine the safest way to engage with law enforcement. A truly effective hotline must protect confidentiality, build trust, and empower survivors to make informed decisions.

- Learn from Cast’s [National Survivor Network](#) and [hear from those with lived experience](#) on the impact of non-consensual law enforcement reporting.
- “This legislation is not the improvement we thought it was. Survivors, advocates, and service providers support the hotline’s existing protocols, which give victims and survivors the power to decide how to and if to involve law enforcement...To combat human trafficking and truly support and empower victims and survivors of human trafficking, we must prioritize their needs, involve them in decision-making processes, and resist the urge to tell them what is best for them.”

— Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee

“At Cast, we are deeply honored to work alongside survivors whose courage drives every step of our advocacy. This year, we were fortunate to collaborate with incredible co-sponsors, learning from their expertise and shared commitment to justice. Together, we championed efforts to secure vital funding, expand access to essential resources, and protect human rights for all. As we reflect on this year’s successes, we remain steadfast in our mission to fight for systemic change and stand with survivors in building a future rooted in dignity and equity.”

— Leigh LaChapelle, Associate Director of Survivor Advocacy

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- [Subscribe](#) to Cast’s Policy Updates to stay involved in our advocacy efforts.
- Join the California Anti-Violence Policy Learning Collaborative (CAPLC)
 - ▶ CAPLC is a forum for non-profits interested in the intersections of interpersonal violence, workers’ rights, and systemic oppression that contribute to various public health crises.
 - ▶ Email leigh@castla.org to join!

- [Donate](#) to Cast to fund our critical work to end human trafficking.