

Date of Hearing: April 14, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Ash Kalra, Chair

AB 1845 Krell – As Amended April 9, 2026

PROPOSED CONSENT

SUBJECT: STUDENT SAFETY: HUMAN TRAFFICKING

KEY ISSUE: SHOULD POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BE REQUIRED TO TRAIN THEIR EMPLOYEES ON HOW TO ADDRESS INCIDENTS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON CAMPUS?

SYNOPSIS

Human trafficking has become a fast-growing criminal enterprise, and colleges and universities are not immune from its impact. Students and their campus communities have a high potential for exploitation. But through awareness and prevention education programs, individuals can learn to seek help, and organizations can be there to support them. This bill seeks to educate on human trafficking, improve data collection, and enhance policies and procedures on college campuses. This bill requires postsecondary institutions to train their employees on identifying and addressing human trafficking incidents, establish policies and procedures regarding human trafficking, collect data on reported incidents, and communicate with law enforcement more efficiently.

This bill is co-sponsored by the Association of American University Women and the California Survivor Coalition. There is no reported opposition. This bill was previously heard by the Assembly Committee on Higher Education which voted unanimously to approve the bill.

SUMMARY: Requires postsecondary institutions to establish employee training, policies, and procedures for addressing incidents of human trafficking on campus. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires postsecondary institutions, on or before July 1, 2027, to include the following topics in employee training:
 - a) The definition of human trafficking, including sex trafficking and labor trafficking.
 - b) Myths and misconceptions about human trafficking.
 - c) Physical and mental signs to be aware of that may indicate that human trafficking is occurring.
 - d) Guidance on how to identify individuals who are most at risk for human trafficking.
 - e) Protocols on how to report human trafficking.
- 2) Requires postsecondary institutions, beginning July 1, 2027, to ensure employees annually complete training that includes the required topics in 1). The training topics in 1) do not need to be provided in a separate training and may be included in in postsecondary institutions' existing employee training.

- 3) Provides liability protection to postsecondary institutions by stating a failure to report human trafficking to a postsecondary institution or to local law enforcement agencies by an employee of the postsecondary institution will not, by itself, result in the liability of a postsecondary institution.
- 4) Requires postsecondary institutions to post the model notice regarding human trafficking in a prominent location.
- 5) Requires postsecondary education institutions who receive student financial aid assistance from the state to do all the following:
 - a) Compile records of all occurrences of crimes on campus that involve violence, human trafficking, hate violence, theft, destruction of property, illegal drugs, or alcohol intoxication that were reported to campus police, campus security, or campus safety authorities. The occurrences as reported will also include arrests conducted by campus police, campus security, or campus safety authorities.
 - b) Disclose immediately or as soon as practicably possible, any report made by either a survivor of human trafficking or by an employee to campus security for the purpose of notifying either the institution or law enforcement, to local law enforcement in the same manner as a disclosure for a violent crime, sexual assault, or hate crime.
- 6) Removes language excluding the California Community Colleges (CCC) from disclosing and reporting specific crimes that occur on campus to the authorities and the public.
- 7) Amends the Kristen Smart Campus Safety Act of 1998 to include the community colleges and human trafficking requirements.
- 8) Requires the governing board of each community college district, the Trustees of the California State University, the Regents of the University of California, and the governing boards of independent postsecondary educational institutions to adopt a policy concerning incidents of human trafficking, in order to receive state funds for student financial assistance. The policy must have the following included:
 - a) A statement that human trafficking is a state and federal crime.
 - b) A statement that human trafficking is a violation of the student and employee code of conduct.
 - c) Physical and mental signs to be aware of that may indicate that human trafficking is occurring.
 - d) Guidance on how to identify individuals who are most at risk for human trafficking.
 - e) Protocols on how to report human trafficking
- 9) Requires, as a condition of the Cal Grant Program, the governing board of each community college district, the Trustees of the California State University, the Regents of the University of California, and the governing boards of independent postsecondary educational institutions to adopt written policies and procedures to ensure that any report of human

trafficking to campus security is immediately, or as soon as practicably possible, forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Makes it a crime of human trafficking for a person to deprive or violate the personal liberty of another with the intent to obtain forced labor or services, or who causes, induces, or persuades a minor to engage in a commercial sex act. (Penal Code Section 236.1.)
- 2) Requires the governing board of a community college district, the Trustees of the California State University, the Board of Directors of the College of the Law, San Francisco, the Regents of the University of California, and the governing board of a postsecondary educational institution receiving public funds for student financial assistance to require the appropriate officials at each campus to compile records of crimes on campus that are reported and involve violence, hate violence, theft, destruction of property, illegal drugs, or alcohol intoxication. (Education Code Section 67380.)
- 3) Requires the Trustees of the California State University, the governing board of independent postsecondary institutions, the governing board of a community college district, and the Regents of the University of California to adopt rules requiring each of their respective campuses to enter into written agreements with local law enforcement agencies that clarify operational responsibility for investigations of certain violent crimes, sexual assaults, and hate crimes occurring on campus. (Education Code Section 67381.)
- 4) Requires, as a condition for participation in the Cal Grant Program, the governing board of a community college district, the Trustees of the California State University, the Regents of the University of California, and the governing board of a private or independent postsecondary educational institution to adopt and implement written policies and procedures to ensure that any report of certain violent crimes, sexual assault, or hate crimes, committed on or off campus, that is received by a campus security authority, and made by the victim for purposes of notifying the institution or law enforcement, is immediately, or as soon as practicably possible, forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement agency. (Education Code Section 67383.)
- 5) Requires the appropriate governing board or body of each campus of the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges, private postsecondary educational institutions, and independent institutions of higher education, as a condition of receiving state financial assistance, to, among other things, provide training to all employees on the identification of sexual harassment, including the person to whom it should be reported. (Education Code Section 67385.7.)
- 6) Establishes that a public entity is liable for injury proximately caused by an act or omission of an employee of the public entity within the scope of their employment if the act or omission would have given rise to a cause of action against that employee. (Government Code Section 815.2.)
- 7) Conditions, pursuant to federal law, the receipt of federal financial aid funding upon a requirement that higher education institutions record specific campus crime statistics and safety policies for consumer protections. The crimes required to be reported are as follows:

murder, sex offenses, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle theft, manslaughter, arson, arrests or persons referred for disciplinary action for liquor law violations, drug-related violations, and weapons possession, hate crimes, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking incidents, and hazing incidents (20 U.S.C. Section 1092 (f).)

- 8) Prohibits, pursuant to federal law, discrimination based on sex in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. (20 U.S.C. Section 1681.)
- 9) Establishes, in federal law, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, with the purpose to combat trafficking in persons, a contemporary manifestation of slavery whose victims are predominantly women and children, to ensure just and effective punishment of traffickers, and to protect their victims. The Act criminalizes trafficking and authorizes various federal actions against “severe forms of trafficking in persons.” (22 U.S.C. Section 7101 *et seq.*)

FISCAL EFFECT: As currently in print this bill is keyed fiscal.

COMMENTS: Human trafficking has become a fast-growing criminal enterprise, and colleges and universities are not immune from its impact. Students and their campus communities have a high potential for exploitation. But through awareness and prevention education programs, individuals can learn to seek help and organizations can be there to support them. This bill seeks to educate on human trafficking, improve data collection, and enhance policies and procedures on college campuses. In support of the bill, the author writes:

California colleges are in a unique position to reach students who may be vulnerable to exploitation and sex trafficking due to environmental risk factors such as housing instability, lack of social or familial support, or naivety to exploitive situations. AB 1845 ensures that sexual harassment policies are updated to include human trafficking identification and prevention. Expanding existing strategies to prevent human trafficking recruitment is vital to protecting the safety of college students.

Human trafficking. Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery that involves depriving or violating the personal liberty of another person with the intent to obtain forced labor or sex. Though recognized as a global problem, identifying trafficking is complex, making it difficult to estimate the full scale of the problem. For example, survivors themselves may not recognize they are being trafficked, and law enforcement may lack the training to correctly identify that an individual is being trafficked.

In 2017, California enacted the Human Trafficking Prevention Education and Training Act, which requires public schools to provide human trafficking prevention education for students grades 7-12. A recent survey of nearly 1,000 Southern California college students found that over 40 percent of surveyed students reported knowing someone who was sold for sex or was trafficked while a college student. (L.A. Urada & A. Weitensteiner, *Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation at U.S. Colleges/Universities* (2025) available at: <https://doi.org/10.64898/2025.12.31.25342184>.) The surveyors recommend introducing state laws to mandate human trafficking training at colleges and universities. (*Id.*)

Training and education are critical tools for combatting trafficking. In a nationally representative survey, many respondents held incorrect beliefs about who trafficking victims are and the circumstances surrounding trafficking. (*Identifying Effective Counter-Trafficking*

Programs and Practices in the U.S.: Legislative, Legal, and Public Opinion Strategies that Work, Vanessa Bouche et al., (2016) available at <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/249670.pdf>.) Reporting from members of the public is uncommon because many people are unable to recognize labor trafficking victims. (*Labor Trafficking: Strategies to Uncover this Hidden Crime*, Little Hoover Commission (September 2020), available at <https://lhc.ca.gov/sites/lhc.ca.gov/files/Reports/251/Report251.pdf>.) Even among law enforcement, researchers have noted that trafficking victims are often mistaken for sex workers. (*Over-Policing Sex Trafficking: How U.S. Law Enforcement Should Reform Operations*, USC Gould International Human Rights Clinic (November 15, 2021) available at <https://humanrightsclinic.usc.edu/2021/11/15/over-policing-sex-trafficking-how-u-s-law-enforcement-should-reform-operations/>.) Myths about trafficking may have a disparate impact on marginalized groups. As argued in the UCLA Law Review, due to a history of racial profiling and stereotyping, law enforcement may be more likely to perceive trafficking victims as criminals, rather than victims of abuse, when they are people of color. (*The Racial Roots of Human Trafficking*, Cheryl Nelson Butler (2015) UCLA Law Review, available at <https://www.uclalawreview.org/racial-roots-human-trafficking/>.)

This bill directs postsecondary institutions to use critical training and education tools to combat human trafficking. The bill requires postsecondary institutions to train their employees on human trafficking prevention. Specifically, the definition of human trafficking, how to identify signs of it, and how to appropriately report it. This bill also requires postsecondary institutions—that receive state funds for financial assistance—to establish human trafficking prevention policies. As discussed above, these tools are shown to be more effective than simply placing notices of prevention resources across campus facilities.

Research and data are limited as to the overall extent of human trafficking on college campuses. This bill requires campuses to track and report incidents of human trafficking, which will help to shed light on the scale of the issue and allow for better resource allocation in response.

Limitations on Liability. Finally, this bill attempts to protect postsecondary institutions from liability in the event an employee of the postsecondary institution fails to report human trafficking to either the postsecondary institution or to local law enforcement. An employee’s failure to report, “by itself” would not result in liability for the postsecondary institution. Essentially, this would bar a civil lawsuit against a college or university if the lawsuit was solely based on an employee’s failure to report a human trafficking incident. However, that would not preclude liability against the college or university for a failure to adequately train their employee. Therefore, the protection offered in this bill is notable, however, it would not completely reduce the liability of postsecondary institutions.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: This bill is co-sponsored by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and the California Survivor Coalition. In support of the bill, AAUW submits:

Human trafficking is a local, state, national and global crisis which impacts men, women and children of all ages. It can be found in every area of the country—rural, suburban, and urban settings—and involve economically and demographically diverse groups of young adults. College students can be vulnerable to environmental risk factors such as housing instability, lack of social or familial support, or naivety to exploitative situations.

A 2023 study conducted among college students on 12 Southern California campuses found that 42% of students reported having known someone who sold sex or was trafficked as a college student. Nearly one in five students (18%) reported experiencing human trafficking in college. (Lianne Urada, *Nemeth Program in Human Trafficking Research Among College Students Final Report*, San Diego State University (Aug. 31, 2023) available at: https://socialwork.sdsu.edu/_resources/files/nemeth-program-in-human-trafficking-research-on-college-students-final-results-urada.pdf.)

Research shows that better training is crucial for those who encounter victims and are in an ideal position to respond and intervene. (Matthew Baker et al., *Improving the Value of School Professionals as Partners in Efforts to Enhance Recognition of an Responses to Youth Sex Trafficking* (2024) 61 *Psychology in Schools* 3785.) It is critical for higher education institutions, students, faculty and staff to recognize the potential risks, behavior, response measures, and indicators for human trafficking. Expanding existing strategies to prevent human trafficking recruitment is vital to protecting the safety of college students.

The California Survivor Coalition write:

Trafficking often hides in plain sight, misidentified as “choice,” dismissed as “behavior,” or overlooked entirely. Many victims are students. Many are targeted because of vulnerabilities tied to housing insecurity, financial need, or prior abuse. Without proper training and systems in place, opportunities for early identification and intervention are missed.

AB 1845 equips campuses to respond differently.

It ensures that the adults responsible for student safety are trained to recognize exploitation, that institutions are accountable for tracking it, and that clear pathways exist for reporting and response.

Importantly, this bill does so while maintaining appropriate protections for institutions and prioritizing victim confidentiality - striking a thoughtful balance between accountability and practicality.

As survivor leaders, we also recognize the power of this bill beyond compliance. It sends a clear message: human trafficking will no longer be invisible in our educational systems.

California has led the nation in advancing policies that recognize exploitation for what it is. AB 1845 continues that leadership by bringing campus systems into alignment with that truth.

For these reasons, the California Survivor Coalition is proud to support and co-sponsor AB 1845.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

3Strands Global Foundation
American Association of University Women (AAUW)

California Survivor Coalition

Opposition

None on file

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