

## ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 2101 (Gipson)

As Amended May 18, 2026

Majority vote

**SUMMARY**

Expands existing human trafficking-related notice posting and training requirements to capture private entities that participate in recovery and response efforts in designated disaster and mitigation sites.

**Major Provisions**

- 1) Adds privately operated entities, subject to specified exemptions, that operate in designated disaster sites and designated mitigation sites that are involved in the response, recovery, rebuilding, or cleanup of a disaster site, permitting related to recovery, rebuilding, or cleanup of a disaster site, or efforts to mitigate or prevent the occurrence of a disaster to the list of businesses and establishments that must post a notice on human trafficking and how to spot and report suspected instances of human trafficking.
- 2) Defines "designated disaster site" as a structure or defined piece of land, or a group of contiguous structures or land, that was physically damaged or destroyed by a disaster as defined by Section 8680.3 of the Government Code.
- 3) Defines "designated mitigation site" as a structure or defined piece of land, or a group of contiguous structures or land, that has been determined to require elimination of materials or fuel pursuant to Section 4291 of the Public Resources Code.
- 4) Requires, on or before June 1, 2027, an entity that operates in an area described as either a "designated disaster site" or "designated mitigation site" to provide at least 20 minutes of training to all employees involved in the recovery, rebuilding, or cleanup of a disaster site, permitting related to recovery, rebuilding, or cleanup of a disaster site, or efforts to mitigate or prevent the occurrence of a disaster.
- 5) Authorizes the training to be developed or administered by a nonprofit or private entity with professional experience related to human trafficking. Requires the training to be delivered in the language that is the most widely spoken language among the employees that will receive the training. Requires the training to include examples and case scenarios relevant to how trafficking occurs at designated disaster sites and designated mitigation sites.

**COMMENTS**

Civil Code Section 52.6 requires numerous businesses and workplaces to post a notice in their establishments informing the employees and the general public of the risk of human trafficking and the hotlines one may call to report suspected instances of trafficking. The full list currently captures fifteen different types of businesses, including hotels and short-term stay establishments; hair, nail, electrolysis, and other similar beauty treatment facilities; emergency rooms and urgent care centers; bus stations; adult or sexually oriented businesses; pediatric facilities; and airports. Additionally, existing law requires two of those existing businesses (bus stations and intercity passenger rail or light rail stations) to ensure their employees who may interact with a victim of human trafficking or who are likely to receive a report from another

employee about suspected human trafficking complete a 20-minute training about how to recognize the signs of human trafficking and how to appropriately report those signs. (Civil Code Section 52.6 (e).)

A business' failure to comply with either the notice provision or the training requirements exposes the business to a civil penalty of \$1,000 for the first violation and \$2,000 for each subsequent violation. Public prosecutors are authorized to bring a claim in court against the misbehaving business but must give the business notice that they are out of compliance and give them a 30-day window to come into compliance before initiating an action.

Importantly, Section 52.6 explicitly states that no liability attaches simply because an employee did not make a report to law enforcement about suspected human trafficking. This provision acknowledges the complexity of human trafficking, and the potential risk to both the victim and the employee that may result from engaging with potential human traffickers.

This bill further expands the list of businesses and entities that are required to comply with existing law's notice-posting provision to include privately operated entities that operate in designated disaster sites and designated mitigation sites that are involved in the response, recovery, rebuilding, or cleanup of a disaster site, permitting related to recovery, rebuilding, or cleanup of a disaster site, or efforts to mitigate or prevent the occurrence of a disaster. The bill defines "designated disaster site" to mean "a structure or defined piece of land, or a group of contiguous structures or land, that was physically damaged or destroyed by a disaster as defined by Section 8680.3 of the Government Code." Government Code Section 8680.3 defines a "disaster" as "a fire, flood, storm, tidal wave, earthquake, terrorism, epidemic, or other similar public calamity that the Governor determines presents a threat to public safety."

The bill defines "designated mitigation site" as "a structure or defined piece of land, or a group of contiguous structures or land, that has been determined to require elimination or fuel pursuant to Section 4291 of the Public Resources Code." Public Resources Code Section 4291 imposes various maintenance obligations on individuals who have some form of control over buildings or structures in "the state responsibility area," aimed at mitigating fire risk.

Civil Code Section 52.6 also requires certain employees of intercity passenger rail or light rail stations and bus stations to complete a 20-minute training on how to recognize the signs of human trafficking and their reporting options. This bill also requires private entities that operate in designated disaster and mitigation sites to provide a 20-minute training "to all employees involved in the recovery, rebuilding, or cleanup of a disaster site, permitting related to recovery, rebuilding, or cleanup of a disaster site, or efforts to mitigate or prevent the occurrence of a disaster." The entity would be required to deliver the training in the language that is most common among the employees and include examples and case scenarios relevant to how human trafficking occurs at designated disaster and mitigation sites.

### **According to the Author**

AB 2101 affirms that California will not allow disaster sites to become breeding grounds for labor abuse. The workers who step in during times of crisis—utility crews, debris removal teams, construction workers, electricians, roofers, and day laborers—are essential to rebuilding communities and restoring normalcy after climate emergencies. When unscrupulous employers exploit these workers by threatening them with ICE or exploitation to silence or coerce them, it is not only unethical—it constitutes trafficking. By expanding "Know Your Rights" protections and strengthening safeguards at disaster recovery worksites,

AB 2101 ensures that those on the front lines of rebuilding are protected, informed, and treated with dignity and respect. As climate-related disasters grow more frequently and immigration enforcement actions intensify, the need for proactive worker protection becomes increasingly urgent. This bill is a critical first step toward closing a dangerous gap in California's anti-trafficking framework.

### **Arguments in Support**

This bill is sponsored by the Sunita Jain Anti-Trafficking Initiative at Loyola Law School. It is supported by workers' rights advocacy organizations and legal services organizations. In support of the bill the sponsor submits:

In the wake of wildfires, floods, earthquakes, and other climate-driven disasters, California relies heavily on a workforce of construction laborers, debris removal crews, roofers, and other restoration workers to help families and communities recover and return to normalcy. With dispersed worksites, long subcontracting chains, minimal oversight, and a workforce that is predominately immigrant, temporary, and/or marginalized and isolated, disaster restoration sites create fertile ground for abuse and labor trafficking - defined as the deprivation of personal liberty by use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel labor or services.

AB 2101 directly addresses these issues. In increasing education, awareness and training around this issue within this high-risk industry, California will take necessary and important first steps towards safeguarding the workers who rebuild natural disasters and by extension, take important first steps towards safeguarding the State's ability to rebuild effectively after a climate catastrophe.

### **Arguments in Opposition**

There is no formal opposition on file. However, CalCom Association, the United States Telecom Association, and CalBroadband have submitted a position of oppose unless amended.

CalBroadband submits:

As currently drafted, AB 2101 may inadvertently apply to telecommunications providers and broadband infrastructure, even though these entities should not be the intended target of the bill. Telecommunications networks are fundamentally different from the types of facilities contemplated under Civil Code Section 52.6. Providers operate highly complex, distributed systems that must remain flexible and rapidly deployable during emergencies. Imposing additional or duplicative requirements on these networks—particularly without clear statutory boundaries—could create regulatory uncertainty and operational challenges.

Moreover, broadband providers already operate under extensive federal and state regulatory frameworks governing reliability, emergency response, and service continuity. Layering additional, potentially conflicting requirements onto these systems risks diverting resources away from core functions—namely, maintaining and restoring service when Californians need it most.

## **FISCAL COMMENTS**

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, ongoing cost pressures of an unknown amount to the courts in additional workload by adding more entities to an existing list of businesses that must comply with an anti-trafficking notice and training requirement with a violation enforceable by public prosecution (GF or Trial Court Trust Fund (TCTF)). Although a

prosecutor may bring a claim for penalties only after a 30-day notice-and-cure period, otherwise limiting the number of claims that are filed in court, it is unclear how entities operating in certain disaster areas, potentially covering hundreds of thousands of acres, can meet existing requirements to post the notice "near the public entrance of the establishment" or "in clear view of the public and employees where similar notices are customarily posted," thus making it unclear how an entity may cure the violation and be relieved of penalties.

It is unknown how many civil actions may be filed statewide and how much court time may be needed to resolve each case, but it generally costs approximately \$1,000 to operate a courtroom for one hour. Although courts are not funded on the basis of workload, increased pressure on staff and the TCTF may create a demand for increased court funding from the GF. The state budget provides annual GF backfills to the TCTF to offset revenue reductions, totaling approximately \$117.3 million in fiscal year 2025-26.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of GF structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

## VOTES

### **ASM JUDICIARY: 12-0-0**

**YES:** Kalra, Macedo, Lee, Bryan, Connolly, Dixon, Harabedian, Pacheco, Papan, Sanchez, Stefani, Zbur

### **ASM EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: 6-1-0**

**YES:** Ransom, Arambula, Bains, Bennett, Calderon, DeMaio

**NO:** Hadwick

### **ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-1-3**

**YES:** Wicks, Aguiar-Curry, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache

**NO:** Ta

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Hoover, Dixon, Tangipa

## UPDATED

VERSION: May 18, 2026

CONSULTANT: Manuela Boucher / JUD. / (916) 319-2334

FN: 0002609