

OFFICE OF ASSEMBLYMEMBER

Eloise Gómez Reyes

FORTY-SEVENTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AB-865 Human Trafficking Training

SUMMARY

AB-865 expands resource family training to include best practices for foster parents to care for children who have experienced - or are at risk of experiencing - human trafficking.

EXISTING LAW/BACKGROUND

Human trafficking is a sensitive and critical issue in the United States where children as young as six years old are susceptible to exploitation, according to a Report¹ by the National Center for Youth Law. The FBI estimates that over 100,000 children are victims of sex trafficking annually, and, according to the National Foster Youth Institute, children with a prior history in the foster youth system are particularly at risk, making up 60% of child sex trafficking victims.

Although the risk to this population is clear, caregivers who are responsible for these youth are not provided with access to proper training on exploitation and means of supporting foster-youth who are survivors of trafficking. As a result, exploited youth and youth at risk of being exploited experience significantly higher rates of housing instability and are not linked to the services and protection they need. Specifically, youth identified as commercially and sexually exploited (CSE) have four times more out-of-home placements than non-CSE youth.²

Since 2014, the California Legislature has invested in the child welfare system by establishing a CSEC Program under the Department of Social Services. AB-855 (Assembly Human Services Committee) – Chaptered 2014, established a mandated training program for resource families to help better identify and intervene in cases when

children are being exploited or at risk of becoming exploited.

Furthermore, SB-794 (Senate Human Services Committee) – Chaptered 2015, created guidelines for county child welfare and probation agencies to identify, report, document, and serve sexually exploited and at-risk children.

Previous legislation codified a critical foundation for foster youth rights and caregiver responsibilities. However, there is a lack of attention surrounding risk factors and trauma triggers for children who are or are at risk of experiencing CSE and labor trafficking. It is imperative that foster parents are provided with training that focuses on these specific needs to ensure they are educated to care in an appropriate and loving manner.

THIS BILL

This bill addresses a gap in current law by mandating training for all resource families to include instruction on best practices for providing care to trafficked minors, including sexually exploited and trafficked minors and those at risk of becoming trafficked.

SUPPORT

- The Women’s Foundation of California, Women’s Policy Institute (**Sponsor**)

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¹ *Commercially Sexually Exploited Girls and Young Women Involved in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice in Los Angeles County: An Exploration and Evaluation of Placement Experiences and Services Received*

² See footnote #1