

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS AND
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NOVEMBER 3, 2015

EXPANSION OF THE CSEC FIRST RESPONDER PROTOCOL

The First Responder Protocol (Protocol) guides law enforcement and child-serving agencies on their roles and responsibilities for responding when they encounter suspected or identified commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC). Under the Protocol, law enforcement officers alert and summon representatives of the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Probation, Mental Health, and Health Services and survivor advocacy groups to provide specialized services within 72 hours to minors identified as victims of sex trafficking. The Protocol uses a victim-centered, strengths-based approach that reflects Los Angeles County’s (County) commitment to treating CSEC as victims of child abuse and human trafficking, rather than criminalizing them as delinquents. The Protocol was formed as a result of a motion the Board of Supervisors (Board) approved in September 2013. The motion sought to mobilize a multi-agency response model that would create a comprehensive and coordinated strategy to be followed Countywide by all public and private sector agencies for responding to victims of child sex trafficking.

The Protocol was piloted with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department’s (Sheriff) Compton and Century stations and the Long Beach Police Department from August 1, 2014 to July 31, 2015. During that time, 36 young people were identified as CSEC and connected to critical services, including psychological and medical screenings

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and housing placements. In the year preceding Protocol implementation, 94 arrests of CSEC were made. This number decreased to 2 arrests during the Protocol's first year, representing an impressive 98 percent decrease in juvenile arrests for prostitution and related charges. Because of these successes, the pilot program has become permanent policy in these three jurisdictions and has since expanded to the Los Angeles Police Department's 77th Area and Southeast Area stations.

Although federal law states that any individual under the age of 18 who is induced to perform a commercial sex act in exchange for anything of value is, by definition, a victim of sex trafficking, in the majority of jurisdictions within the County, minors are still being arrested, detained, and charged with prostitution and related crimes.

There is a need to expand the Protocol Countywide. Aside from the obvious benefits of rescuing victims and connecting them to life-saving resources, early and frequent collaboration between law enforcement and victim service providers helps victims and prosecutors. Victims who receive immediate and comprehensive assistance are more likely to help bring their traffickers to justice.

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Instruct the CSEC Integrated Leadership Team and the CSEC Unified Operational Model (the two new entities proposed by the Chief Executive Office) to meet and report back in writing within 60 days on:

1. A proposed plan and timeline for expanding the Protocol into the County's unincorporated areas and contract cities;
2. Recommendations on how to enlist the participation of the cities that operate their own police departments; and
3. A list of the crimes that minors who are identified as CSEC are arrested for most often, along with prevalence rates.

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