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Proclaiming January 2026 as Human Trafficking Prevention Month

Twenty-six years ago, Congress enacted the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000¹ (TVPA) to strengthen our national commitment to combat trafficking in all its forms including sex trafficking, labor trafficking, slavery and involuntary servitude. The TVPA established a comprehensive framework centered on prevention, survivor protection and services, and accountability for traffickers. Ten years later, President Barack Obama proclaimed January as National Human Trafficking Prevention Month reinforcing the country's commitment to preventing and ending human trafficking. This grave human rights abuse exploits millions of people around the world in forced labor and commercial sex. Its reach cuts across age, gender, and background, making education, prevention, and collective action essential to ending this injustice.

Human trafficking is defined as the exploitation of a person through force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of commercial sex or labor. Importantly, trafficking does not always involve physical restraint. Many victims are controlled through fear, psychological manipulation, threats, debt, or abuse of power, making exploitation difficult to detect.

¹ [H.R.3244 - 106th Congress \(1999-2000\): Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)

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Human trafficking is caused by several factors. Issues like income inequality, poverty, mass incarceration, systemic racism, housing and food insecurity, and exposure to violence can make people vulnerable.

Los Angeles County (County) is the most populous county in the nation and not immune to this crisis. Unfortunately, human trafficking has surfaced in many areas of the County and takes various forms, including commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, domestic servitude, and coercive work in industries such as construction, hospitality, agriculture, caregiving, and manufacturing etc. Victims may be U.S. citizens or immigrants, housed or unhoused, youth or adults. Recognizing this reality has driven changes in enforcement practices to focus on identifying victims wherever exploitation occurs and responding with support rather than punishment.

The County has made significant strides over the past decade, particularly in addressing the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth (CSEC). In 2024, the County's Child Trafficking Steering Committee released a Five-Year Strategic Plan to Prevent and Address Child Trafficking, advancing a public health approach and initiatives such as:

- Law Enforcement First Responder Protocols
- Safe Youth Zones
- Survivor advocacy and training
- Specialized housing and services, including Intensive Services Foster Care for trafficking-impacted youth.

At the same time, the County continues to strengthen its response to adult survivors and labor trafficking, working in partnership with the Los Angeles Regional Human Trafficking Task Force, the largest co-located task force in the nation.

Central to the County's approach is the leadership of survivors with lived experience, whose voices guide policy, practice, and system reform. The County recognizes that no single agency or organization can address human trafficking alone and has prioritized cross-departmental coordination and collaboration with community-based organizations to build a more effective, equitable, and trauma-informed response.

Human Trafficking Prevention Month provides an important opportunity to raise public awareness, educate residents on the signs of trafficking, reduce stigma, and connect individuals and communities to resources and support.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors proclaim January 2026 as Human Trafficking Prevention Month in Los Angeles County, and reaffirm the County's public health approach and commitment to:

1. Increasing public awareness and education on human trafficking and labor trafficking affecting both children and adults;
2. Supporting survivor-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive services;
3. Strengthening prevention efforts that address root causes and reduce vulnerability; and
4. Advancing public-private and community partnerships to ensure a coordinated, comprehensive Countywide response to prevent and address human trafficking in all its forms.

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