

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS LINDSEY P. HORVATH

February 10, 2026

Supporting Probation and Foster Youth Impacted by Human Trafficking with Community-Based Supports

Over the last several years, Los Angeles County (County) has done significant work to combat human trafficking in all forms. This work includes elevating the voices of survivors, partnering with community-based providers, and launching several Countywide initiatives aimed at identifying and supporting youth impacted by Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE). Most significantly, in 2024 after a long planning and engagement process led by the National Center for Youth Law, this Board adopted a new [5-year Strategic](#) Plan (the Plan) to prevent and address child sex and labor trafficking.

The Plan moves towards a comprehensive public health response grounded in prevention, harm reduction, and the recognition that system involvement itself can compound trauma, disrupt development, and undermine long-term stability for trafficking-impacted youth. The Plan, and other efforts adopted by this Board, represent a paradigm

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shift to focus on prevention, community-based response, and health equity rather punitive actions to address all human trafficking in LA County. Importantly, the Plan was informed by both public agencies and the community, including young people, their families, and the community-based organizations that serve them. The Plan is mindful of the state mandates required of the Los Angeles County Departments of Probation (Probation) and Children and Family Services (DCFS) under Senate Bills 855 and 794, including comprehensive training, development and facilitation of multidisciplinary teams, assessments of youth identified as at risk of or impacted by trafficking, and support for dedicated courts within both the delinquency and dependency systems. Probation and DCFS receive annual state funding to support SB 855 and 794 mandates.

As we transition to a public health model, we must ensure that young people in our custody receive the supportive services they need to begin healing and recovery. The Los Angeles County Probation Department's Child Trafficking Unit (CTU), established in 2011, was created as part of a broader effort to develop alternatives to detention, as the County began to recognize that CSE youth are victims in need of services and protection—not arrest, prosecution, and confinement. The CTU provides intensive, trauma-informed, strengths-based supervision and case management to youth on probation, intentionally shifting away from sanction-driven practices toward a relationship-centered model grounded in safety, trust, and long-term healing. They also refer young people to contracted community-based providers for ongoing supportive services.

CTU staffing has declined rapidly over the last three years, due to deployments, transfers, mandated 90-day home/work rotations, and repeated reassignments,

significantly impacting continuity and capacity. When the CTU was fully staffed and functioning as designed, fewer victims of trafficking were detained, and more youth were safely supported in the community through strong referrals to advocacy and service providers. Today, the erosion of staffing and continuity has contributed to an uptick in trafficking-impacted youth being detained on warrants and violations, reflecting preventable failures in continuity of care, community-based engagement, and access to timely supportive services, rather than increased public safety risk. Without stable, specialized support, many of these youth continue to cycle in and out of detention—not because their needs have been addressed, but because the systems no longer have the capacity to provide sustained, relationship-based intervention in the community.

DCFS also established specialized CSEC Continuous Services Units, each staffed with approximately six Children’s Social Workers (CSWs) and a Supervising Children’s Social Worker (SCSW), to provide trauma-informed, client-centered services to youth who have experienced CSE and their families. These units carry reduced caseloads, allowing CSWs to engage youth multiple times per week, support caregivers, and respond intensively to safety and stabilization needs. The specialized CSWs work in close collaboration with multidisciplinary partners—including CSE advocates, mental health providers, public health nurses, attorneys, Probation, schools, and community agencies—to develop and continually adapt coordinated case plans focused on safety, permanency, and well-being. In addition, DCFS created an AB12 CSEC Unit dedicated to serving non-minor dependents ages 18–21, providing developmentally tailored support to help young adults build self-sufficiency through housing stability, independent living skills, education, employment readiness, and access to specialized CSEC and

transitional services.

From the earliest stages of Los Angeles County's response to commercial sexual exploitation, agencies recognized that no single system could meet the complex needs of trafficked youth. With guidance from survivors, the County understood that many young people had experienced harm, punishment, or broken trust within formal systems, and that healing required supportive relationships beyond government agencies alone. As a result, the County prioritized partnerships with community-based organizations to provide specially trained advocates—often individuals with lived experience—who could offer survivor-centered services, case management, consistent non-system support, and mentorship. Over the years, both Probation and DCFS have contracted with advocacy organizations to deliver crisis response, emotional support, and system navigation. These advocates play a critical role in strengthening engagement, promoting stabilization, and reinforcing that effective anti-trafficking work must be collaborative, survivor-informed, and rooted in trusted community relationships. As the County advances a public health approach, community-based advocates should be recognized as essential infrastructure that reduces system reliance, prevents unnecessary detention, and supports stabilization through trusted, non-punitive relationships.

As a result of our efforts to address both child and adult trafficking and the shift to a public health model, the scope and volume of work has expanded significantly, and additional structure, capacity, and support are now needed to ensure all state mandated deliverables and community-based initiatives are effectively implemented and sustained. At the same time, the erosion of specialized staffing, particularly within Probation's Child

Trafficking Unit, has weakened continuity of care and contributed to increased detention and system cycling among trafficking-impacted youth. It is now necessary to provide the Board with a clear assessment of current staffing, service delivery, advocacy engagement, dual-jurisdiction practices, and funding utilization in order to identify gaps, strengthen accountability, stabilize trauma-informed, community-based responses for youth impacted by trafficking, and determine what additional supports are required to successfully carry out this expanded body of work. We must ensure that young people in our custody are connected to the services they need to heal. Delays, staffing gaps, or interdepartmental barriers must not result in punitive responses or prolonged custody for youth whose primary needs are safety, stability, and care. Access to timely, community-based support is a matter of health equity and human rights. A public health approach emphasizes accountability and effectiveness by evaluating which interventions prevent harm and support recovery, and by identifying where current practices consume significant public resources without improving safety or youth well-being.

In implementing this public health approach, all data collection, analysis, and reporting pursuant to this motion shall be limited to what is necessary to assess service access, continuity of care, and outcomes, and shall be conducted in a manner that protects youth privacy, minimizes the risk of surveillance or unintended system consequences, and complies with all applicable confidentiality and data-sharing requirements.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE, that the Board of Supervisors direct the Departments of Probation, Children and Family Services (DCFS), and Youth Development (DYD) to report back in writing within 30 days on the following:

1. Probation and DCFS to provide current staffing levels within specialized units responsible for fulfilling county initiatives and state mandates under Senate Bills 855 and 794, including the number of filled positions, current vacancies (including those on home assignment within Probation), and a detailed plan outlining how each Department will fill vacant positions and stabilize staffing to ensure sufficient capacity to serve youth identified as at risk of or impacted by trafficking.
2. Probation and DCFS to provide deidentified data on youth identified as being impacted by trafficking and currently under their supervision, including the number of youth identified; current living situation (custody, foster care, home, or other placements); the specialized unit or program providing services; the number of youth with dual jurisdiction; the number currently missing with active delinquency warrants (Probation) and missing from DCFS supervision; and, for Probation-supervised youth, the date of the most recent criminal arrest (excluding probation violations or bench warrants).
3. Probation and DCFS provide data on the number of youth referred to advocacy services over the past two years who are identified as being impacted by trafficking, disaggregated by contracted advocacy provider (including DCFS advocacy contracts and DYD purchase orders) and available outcome measures reflecting youth engagement, stability, and service connection after one year of advocacy support.
4. Probation and DCFS to provide a detailed accounting of funding utilized over the past five years from County Healthier Communities, Stronger Families, Thriving Children (HST) funds and state allocations under Senate Bills 855 and 794, including funded staffing positions, advocacy and service contracts, training and technical assistance,

and interagency agreements such as Locate Memorandum Of Understandings with the Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. The departments shall also report on measurable outcomes and identify any funds remaining unspent on a year-over-year basis. This report should include a discussion on what, if any, funding sources can be moved from Probation to DYD, and an accounting of funding available under SB 794 funds or other sources to further support the trafficking work.

5. Probation and DCFS to jointly develop and submit a coordinated plan of support for dual-jurisdiction youth impacted by trafficking. Considering Child Trafficking Unit staffing limitations, the plan should examine options to minimize dual-system involvement by consolidating care within the least restrictive, most supportive system, including options for DCFS to assume primary case management responsibility for appropriate dual-status youth, while Probation conducts a comprehensive review of all Commercial Sexual Exploitation-identified youth to determine eligibility for termination of probation jurisdiction for youth without new criminal charges for at least one year, as a stabilizing intervention that supports developmental health, educational continuity, and long-term recovery. This report should also explore whether the Department of Youth Development can provide referrals for those Probation youth without a DCFS case. Results and data shall be included in the report back.

6. Probation and DYD to develop and submit a plan to ensure all youth identified as being impacted by trafficking or at high risk under Probation supervision are referred to contracted community advocacy providers and other DYD-contracted providers as

appropriate, including youth in the community and youth while in custody at Campus Kilpatrick (CVK) and Dorothy Kirby Center (DKC). The plan should include procedures for community advocacy agencies to engage youth as alternatives to incarceration, while in custody so that relationships are established prior to release, and to engage parents and caregivers during this period to prepare families to receive their youth home or into community placements, ensuring continuity of care and a warm handoff to services upon release. If such a plan is currently under development through the County's work to end girls' incarceration, Probation should provide such plan or status update with the expected completion date.

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