



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*November 6, 2024*

### **Transmuting Grief: Good News, Bad News, and the Road Ahead for Human Rights and Human Trafficking Prevention Policy After the 2024 Election**

At the Sunita Jain Anti-Trafficking Initiative, we share in the profound sense of grief that this election has brought to many of us. We wish everyone time to rest and recover as we prepare for what lies ahead, focusing on strategically developing proactive responses. We recognize that many of the election results will increase vulnerability to exploitation, likely making efforts to prevent human trafficking even more challenging. There is a long road ahead, but we're all in this together.

#### **In the upcoming year, we are working on several initiatives aimed at strengthening protections for human trafficking survivors, including:**

- Improving access benefits available for human trafficking survivors through the California Victim Compensation Board (CalVCB).
- Securing funding for a prevalence study on human trafficking to ensure that prevention polices are grounded on evidence.
- Securing funding to launch the first pilot Restorative Justice Program for human trafficking survivors.
- Updating anti-trafficking procurement policies in Los Angeles and statewide to strengthen human trafficking prevention efforts.
- Implementation of polices in Los Angeles and statewide to better prevent child labor trafficking by forced criminality, aiming to decrease the number of minors who are coerced into committing crime as part of their labor and ensure they receive the proper supportive services to Prevent Child Labor Trafficking by Forced Criminality.
- Passing first-of-its-kind legislation to protect all temporary workers coming to California from trafficking and fraudulent practices of foreign labor recruiters.

#### **The Bad News**

##### **Prop 36**

Public safety, public health, and human trafficking survivors will undoubtedly suffer following the passage of Prop 36, which reignites the failed and harmful "war on drugs," making drug possession a felony again. Prop 36 increases punishment for those in desperate poverty and likely ensures that more trafficking survivors, forced to commit crimes by their trafficker, will be arrested and imprisoned. A [survey](#) of homeless youth in Oakland and Los Angeles identified as victims of labor trafficking found that 80% of these children are trafficked for forced criminality, with the crime primarily involving forced drugs sales. Prisons will receive more taxpayer money while cutting funding for victims, treatments, mental health services, rehabilitation, and housing

– all underfunded resources that [research](#) proves effectively reduces rates of crime and drug use. Prop 36 prioritizes funneling funding to prisons, where incarcerated people are routinely [sex trafficked](#) and [labor trafficked](#).

### **Prop 6**

The failure of Prop 6 dealt a devastating blow. Prop 6 would have ended state-sponsored slavery and indentured servitude in California prisons. Nevada passed an amendment to end slavery in prisons, but California voted to uphold the horrific cruelty of forced labor. [Research](#) shows that at least half of all women prisoners have been sexually abused prior to incarceration, and 92% are survivors of physical abuse. Our prisons punish trauma rather than provide rehabilitation, often subjecting trafficking survivors to state-sponsored labor trafficking in the process.

### **Prop 32**

By a very small margin, Prop 32 failed in securing a higher statewide minimum wage of \$18 per hour. A living wage that keeps pace with inflation helps prevent human trafficking and provides survivors with essential support, such as housing stability. A recent survey and [report](#) authored by trafficking survivors Evelyn Chumbow, Fainess Lipenga, and Nat Paul identifies economic hardship, poverty, and homelessness as some of the most significant risk factors and root causes of vulnerability to trafficking.

## **The Good News**

### **Los Angeles: Mayor Karen Bass to Expedite LA's Sanctuary City Status Ordinance**

In light of the election results, Mayor Karen Bass [announced](#) that she, along with the Los Angeles City Attorney Hydee Feldstein Soto, will be expediting an ordinance to affirm Los Angeles's status as a sanctuary city. In a [statement](#), Mayor Bass said, "This moment demands urgency. Immigrant protections make our communities stronger and our city better." She added that "Solidarity is an action, not rhetoric. Los Angeles stands together." It is these kinds of actions that prevent human trafficking.

### **California: Governor Newsom Will Convene a Special Legislative Session**

On Dec 2, 2024, Governor Newsom will meet with the California legislature to strengthen California's legal resources and fundamental rights. He proclaimed, "the freedoms we hold dear in California are under attack — and we won't sit idle," We hope that Governor Newsom will make good on this promise and increase protections for those vulnerable to human trafficking in California, in response to anticipated reduced federal oversight.