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For Immediate Release

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DA-Sponsored Human Trafficking Bill Passes California Legislature

SB230 Allows Victims of Sex Trafficking More Support

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) announced today that a human trafficking-related bill co-sponsored by her office and authored by State Senator Toni Atkins has been passed by the California Legislature and will now go to Governor Brown's desk for signing. Senate Bill 230 will allow judges hearing human trafficking cases to allow evidence of a defendant's prior acts of human trafficking.

SB 230 will enable past victims of sex trafficking to testify to the prior acts of their abuser when their abuser is on trial for trafficking new victims. This will ensure that sex trafficking victims have the same rights and protections as other victims of sexual offenses, as well as victims of domestic violence, elder and dependent abuse, and child abuse. SB 230 does not mandate that these prior acts be admitted in a defendant's trial, instead it gives judges the discretion to allow prosecutors to present such evidence in appropriate cases.

“This law is a much needed tool to bring justice and support to victims of sex trafficking,” said District Attorney Summer Stephan. “The trauma caused to victims by this form of modern day slavery makes it very difficult for victims to face a perpetrator in court who is often a gang member. This bill allows previous victims— who were able to escape, regain their lives and become survivors—to support the new victims in court by testifying to their own victimization by the same perpetrator. This change in the law provides hope to new victims and assists in holding traffickers accountable by presenting a truthful, full picture to a judge and jury. State Senator Toni Atkins’ extraordinary efforts in authoring and passing this bill will provide victims of sex trafficking the same protections provided to victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse.”

California is home to three cities on the FBI's list of the top 13 cities for child prostitution – San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Researchers at the University of San Diego and Point Loma Nazarene University have estimated that as many as 8,000 people in the San Diego region alone could be victimized each year.

To read SB 230 in its entirety, [click here](#).

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