



PREVENTING VIOLENCE
AND DEVELOPING
YOUTH LEADERS

March 28, 2017

Assemblymember Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Sr. (Chair)
Assembly Public Safety Committee
1020 N Street, Room 111
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: OPPOSITION to AB 1402 (Allen)

Dear Assemblymember Jones-Sawyer:

On behalf of Youth ALIVE!, I am writing to oppose Assembly Bill (AB) 1402 (Allen) which would repeal Senate Bill (SB) 1322 (Mitchell).

Last year, Governor Brown signed SB 1322 into law, ensuring that children who are sold for sex receive the same protections and support provided to all victims of child abuse. It decriminalized victims of a crime, a milestone moment in the battle to secure rights and legal protections for victims of child sex trafficking.

Youth ALIVE! is a violence prevention and intervention organization that helps young people become leaders and advocates for the change they would like to see in their communities through our Teens on Target Program; mentors and supports healing for young people on probation and/or who have been violently injured, through our Caught in the Crossfire program; and works with families grieving in the wake of a homicide through our Khadafy Washington Project. We know that children should not be held responsible for their victimization.

SB 1322 builds on California's multi-year investment in county child welfare systems to bolster services for exploited children. Consistent with federal law, in 2014, California passed SB 855, which clarified that sexually exploited children are child abuse victims and thus may be served by the child welfare system. SB 855 also established the Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Program (CSEC Program) and allocated \$14-19 million in ongoing annual funding for counties to develop robust services and child welfare-led multidisciplinary responses for sex trafficked and at-risk children. This funding also supports counties in fulfilling new federal obligations to identify, document, and serve victims.

In 2016, this Committee agreed to correct the injustice of criminalizing victims of child sex trafficking. It voted 6-1 in support of SB 1322.

Unfortunately, AB 1402 would re-criminalize child victims of sexual violence rather than protect their pathway to victim-centered services. This repeal attempt is misguided, harmful and driven by calculated politics, not sound policy.

Please stand up for vulnerable children in your district. Youth ALIVE! strongly urges you to oppose AB 1402.

Sincerely,

Anne Marks
Executive Director

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