

ORANGE COUNTY HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE

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The modern fight against human trafficking in Orange County began in 2004 with the inception of the Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force (OCHTTF). Since then, the OCHTTF has assisted over 1,220 victims of human trafficking with the assistance of countless organizations made up of selfless individuals who choose daily to combat what has been described by many as modern-day slavery.

Children as young as 13 years old have been recovered during OCHTTF investigations. These children are exploited, and their bodies are used as a commodity for the financial benefit of traffickers. Victims must meet daily quotas and are exposed to routine physical and psychological violence. The American Academy of Pediatrics stated, "Violence and manipulation are common, and victims are at increased risk of injury, sexual assault, infectious diseases, substance misuse, untreated chronic medical conditions, malnutrition, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) major depression and other mental health disorders, homicide and suicide."

Although law enforcement has come a long way in recognizing, investigating, and prosecuting human trafficking, current California law defines human trafficking as a non-serious or non-violent crime. Organizations such as the OCHTTF have adapted their practices and procedures to achieve the most favorable outcome in assisting recovered victims. Recognizing victims' trauma has led law enforcement to use trauma-informed interview techniques and victim-centered investigations. These tactics further the chances survivors of human trafficking achieve a successful recovery while strengthening law enforcement's chances at a favorable prosecution.

Senate Bill 1042, introduced by California Senator Shannon Grove, would add human trafficking to California crimes defined as serious and violent and classify the crime as a strike under California's Three Strikes law. As the Chief of Police for the lead agency of the OCHTTF, I strongly support Senate Bill 1042, which will hold human traffickers accountable for their vile behavior. Senate Bill 1042 reconciles the serious, violent, and grotesque nature of human trafficking with the punishment for committing the crime.

Jorge Cisneros, Chief of Police
Anaheim Police Department