

On Human Trafficking Awareness Day, Attorney General Kamala D. Harris Announces Collaboration with Truckers Against Trafficking and Law Enforcement Partners

Details

Written by IVN

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Oakland, California - In honor of Human Trafficking Awareness Day, Attorney General Kamala D. Harris today announced that the Attorney General's office, Truckers Against Trafficking, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California, and the Alameda County District Attorney's Office will host a training on Wednesday, January 13, 2016, to equip the trucking industry and law enforcement with the tools to effectively identify and charge suspected traffickers.

The training will be held at the Port of Oakland and will provide resources to help truck drivers recognize and report suspected traffickers to law enforcement. Given the cross-jurisdictional nature of the crime of human trafficking and the use of major thoroughfares by traffickers, truck drivers are particularly well-positioned to aid law enforcement. The event will also feature The Freedom Drivers Project, a first-of-its-kind 48-foot mobile exhibit that includes artifacts from trafficking cases, portraits of Truckers Against Trafficking members, and ways members of the public can join the fight against human trafficking.

"Human trafficking is one of the world's most heinous and profitable criminal enterprises," said Attorney General Harris. "It is unconscionable that each year, thousands of vulnerable children and adults are forced into labor and prostitution. Those who buy trafficked labor must also be held accountable for their outrageous crimes. I thank Truckers Against Trafficking and our law enforcement partners for their work to dismantle networks of traffickers and this criminal industry."

"California is at the national forefront in the fight to end human trafficking. Local and statewide law enforcement agencies and prosecutor's offices cannot wage this battle without the assistance of groups like Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT)," said Alameda County District Attorney Nancy E. O'Malley. "TAT enables concerned truckers to act as additional eyes on the road for signs of human trafficking and to subvert demand for sex trafficking. Every member of our community should be aware that children and adults are trafficked on a daily basis around our state and nation, and we each have a vital role to play in ending this horrendous criminal enterprise."

"We are pleased to be able to forge a partnership with Attorney General Harris' office, Alameda County District Attorney O'Malley and the Truckers Against Trafficking to combat human trafficking," said Acting U.S. Attorney Brian J. Stretch. "This alliance will illustrate once again why a collaborative model unifying state and federal law enforcement with service providers is an effective instrument in our fight against human trafficking."

"We are thrilled to work with our partners at the California Trucking Association and the California Attorney General's office to bring law enforcement and key trucking industry stakeholders into a networking and training session," said Kylla Lanier, the Deputy Director for Truckers Against Trafficking. "By equipping these critical audiences to recognize suspected human trafficking, traffickers will find it harder to operate, and victims will have a better opportunity at being recovered."

"The California Trucking Association is proud to partner with Truckers Against Trafficking and the California Attorney General's office," said Shawn Yadon, CEO of The California Trucking Association. "As a long-standing supporter of Truckers Against Trafficking, the trucking industry has made it a top priority to work with our coalition partners by helping to deliver educational platforms to fight against issues related to human trafficking."

"We encourage everyone to get educated on trafficking by visiting <http://www.notraffickahead.com/>, a workgroup of over 50 agencies across the Bay Area leading the fight against Human Trafficking," said Sharan Dhanoa of the No Traffick Ahead Coalition.

Wednesday's training is part of an ongoing partnership between Attorney General Harris's office and U.S. Attorney's offices in California to address the need for heightened awareness of labor trafficking, which is often overlooked in anti-human trafficking efforts. Participants in previous trainings have included the U.S. Department of Labor, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, California's Employment Development Department and Department of Fair Employment and Housing, City Attorney's Offices, local regulatory offices, as well as service providers and law enforcement agencies. This training in Oakland is the ninth in a series that began over a year ago in Fresno and other trainings have been held in Sacramento, San Francisco, Bakersfield, Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Luis Obispo.

On Tuesday, January 12, 2016, Attorney General Harris will also receive the Modern Day Abolition Award from the San Francisco Coalition Against Human Trafficking, which she helped to establish while serving as District Attorney of San Francisco. The award recognizes individuals who have worked to prevent and prosecute human trafficking and protect victims from violence, exploitation, and slavery.

Throughout her career, Attorney General Harris has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to fighting human trafficking. She has advocated for increased collaboration between federal, state and local law enforcement agencies in investigating and prosecuting trafficking cases, as well as early and frequent collaboration between law enforcement and victim service providers.

In addition, Attorney General Harris's office will be working with local law enforcement in Santa Clara County and statewide to combat human trafficking in the lead-up to and during the Super Bowl, which will be held on February 7, 2016, in the city of Santa Clara, California.

The Attorney General's office is actively investigating and prosecuting human trafficking cases across California, most recently securing convictions against four defendants who were running a brothel out of an Emeryville massage parlor, with the owner receiving a 10-year prison sentence.

Last year, Attorney General Harris released a resource guide for companies on complying with the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act of 2010 (SB 657), a law requiring retailers and manufacturers doing business in California that have annual worldwide gross receipts exceeding \$100,000,000 to disclose on their websites their efforts to eradicate slavery and human trafficking from their product supply chains. Attorney General Harris's office is actively investigating companies that may be in violation of the law. More information is available at <https://oag.ca.gov/SB657>.

In 2014, Attorney General Harris released a report, *Gangs Beyond Borders: California and the Fight Against Transnational Organized Crime*, which identified human trafficking as an emerging criminal enterprise undertaken by transnational criminal organizations and recommended creating state task forces to investigate and disrupt these organizations. In 2012, Attorney General Harris created a Human Trafficking Work Group and released a report, *The State of Human Trafficking in California*, which outlined the growing prevalence of this \$32 billion-a-year global industry and the way in which California is uniquely affected.