



**SB 963 – Human Trafficking Detection Act**  
*Enhancing Emergency Responses to Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence*

**SUMMARY**

SB 963 requires the implementation of self-identifying human trafficking and domestic violence programs in acute care hospitals, ensuring we have a unified approach in addressing the needs of victims through patient-centered and trauma-informed care.

**BACKGROUND**

Emergency physicians are in a unique position to recognize human trafficking or domestic violence, as the emergency department may be the first or only contact a victim has with the medical community.<sup>1</sup>

Most trafficking victims will have contact with the health care system at some point during their exploitation – including at primary care, reproductive health clinics, mental health facilities, substance use disorder treatments, or most often, emergency departments.

Health professionals are on the front lines of identifying and caring for active victims of trafficking or violent situations. 88% of trafficking survivors reported accessing healthcare services during their trafficking situation. Of this, 68.3% were seen at an emergency room.<sup>2</sup>

Emergency rooms are ideal locations for identification programs of human trafficking and domestic violence cases, allowing staff to intervene, evaluate, and provide resources to victims in a safe, confidential, and timely manner. Most trafficking survivors report they have sought emergency medical treatment but have gone undetected as victims. It is vital that emergency rooms are equipped and trained to provide trauma-informed care so that California can effectively identify and assist victims.

**THE PROBLEM**

In 2018, the National Human Trafficking Hotline received the highest volume of calls from California, followed by Texas and Florida. It is estimated that 50,000 people are trafficked into the United States each year. Child sex trafficking encompasses 52% of cases and women make up 94% of all human trafficking victims identified.<sup>3</sup>

In 2021, California reported the largest number of human trafficking cases, making it the state with the most identified cases of human trafficking. California consistently reports the highest human trafficking rates in the United States, with 1,334 cases reported in 2020.<sup>4</sup> Much of this ranking is also due to our data reporting – California has some of the most aggressive reporting requirements for human trafficking in the nation.

Domestic violence cases in California are also startling – 1 in 5 women and 1 in 7 men report having experienced severe physical violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.<sup>5</sup> In 2018, California received 166,890 domestic violence related calls to law enforcement, but other domestic violence incidents go unreported, so this number is most likely much higher than reported.<sup>5</sup> Alarming, 1 in 6 homicide victims are killed by an intimate partner.

**THE SOLUTION**

SB 963 will ensure that emergency departments prioritize trauma-informed programs to identify victims of human trafficking and domestic violence through a confidential, self-identifying process – a crucial step towards identifying victims and providing lifesaving support.

<sup>1</sup> [Emergency Medicine Residents' Association](#)

<sup>2</sup> [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#).

<sup>3</sup> [Ibid](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Human Trafficking by State](#)

<sup>5</sup> [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#)

<sup>5</sup> [California Department of Public Health](#)

## **SUPPORT**

---

- Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (co-sponsor)
- San Francisco Safe House (co-sponsor)
- California Medical Association (co-sponsor)
- The San Francisco Marin Medical Society
- California Association of Nurse Anesthesiology
- California Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians
- California Hospital Association
- California Nurses Association
- California Kidney Care Alliance
- Sunita Jain Anti-Trafficking Initiative
- Sutter Health
- FindHelp

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

---

Amaya Childes, *Legislative Aide*

[Amaya.childes@sen.ca.gov](mailto:Amaya.childes@sen.ca.gov)