

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
Senator Thomas Umberg, Chair
2025-2026 Regular Session

AB 2101 (Gipson)
Version: May 18, 2026
Hearing Date: June 23, 2026
Fiscal: Yes
Urgency: No
ME

SUBJECT

Human trafficking: notice and training: disaster sites

DIGEST

This bill requires a privately operated entity that operates in a designated disaster site or mitigation site, as defined, to post a specified notice regarding human trafficking and to provide specified human trafficking training to their employees, as provided.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 52.6 of the Civil Code (Section 52.6) requires certain establishments to post notices regarding resources for witnesses to, and victims of, human trafficking and slavery. That section also requires rail and bus stations to train their employees in identifying and reporting incidents of human trafficking. The Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) also requires hotel and motel employers to provide at least 20 minutes of training and education regarding human trafficking awareness to their employees, as provided. Both federal and state law authorize civil actions by victims of human trafficking, and sex trafficking in particular.

The author brings this bill to expand the reach of Section 52.6 to include privately operated entities that operate in designated disaster sites or mitigation sites involved in the response, recovery, rebuilding, or cleanup of a disaster site, permitting related to recovery, rebuilding, or cleanup of a disaster site, or efforts to mitigate or prevent the occurrence of a disaster on the list of establishments that must post the specified notice regarding forced commercial sex, housework, farm work, construction, factory, retail, or restaurant work, or any other activity. The bill also requires that, on or before June 1, 2027, a privately operated entity that operates in the designated disaster sites or mitigation sites provide at least 20 minutes of training regarding human trafficking to their employees. The bill is sponsored by the Sunita Jain Anti-trafficking Initiative at Loyola Law School and supported by various organizations that work to prevent

human trafficking and support the survivors of trafficking. The Committee received no timely opposition.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LAW

Existing law:

- 1) Provides that any person who deprives or violates the personal liberty of another with the intent to obtain forced labor or services is guilty of the crime of human trafficking. (Pen. Code § 236.1 (a).)
- 2) Requires specified businesses and establishments to post notices in a conspicuous place near the public entrance of the establishment or in another conspicuous location in clear view of the public and employees where similar notices are customarily posted. (Civ. Code § 52.6 (a).)
- 3) Requires the notices to include specific language regarding a textline and various hotlines to contact if one is aware of or is a victim of human trafficking. The Department of Justice is required to create a model notice that may be used by these businesses. (Civ. Code § 52.6 (b)-(d).)
- 4) Provides that a business or other establishment that operates intercity passenger rail, light rail, or bus stations shall provide at least 20 minutes of training to employees who may interact with, or come into contact with, a victim of human trafficking or who are likely to receive, in the course of their employment, a report from another employee about suspected human trafficking, in recognizing the signs of human trafficking and how to report those signs to the appropriate law enforcement agency. A list of topics that must be covered in such training is further provided. (Civ. Code § 52.6 (e)-(g).)
- 5) Subjects businesses that fail to comply with the notice and training requirements of Section 52.6 of the Civil Code to specified civil penalties. (Civ. Code § 52.6 (h).)
- 6) Provides that nothing in Civil Code Section 52.6 prevents local governing bodies from adopting and enforcing a local ordinance, rule, or regulation to prevent slavery or human trafficking. (Civ. Code § 52.6 (i).)

This bill:

- 1) Requires privately operated entities that operate in a designated disaster site or designated mitigation site, as defined, that are involved in the response, recovery, rebuilding, or cleanup of a disaster site, permitting related to recovery, rebuilding, or cleanup of a disaster site, or efforts to mitigate or prevent the occurrence of a disaster to post the notice regarding slavery and human trafficking.

Telecommunications companies and internet service providers are exempted from the notice requirement.

- 2) Requires a privately operated entity described in 1), above, to provide at least 20 minutes of training in recognizing the signs of human trafficking and how to report those signs to the appropriate law enforcement agency to all employees involved in specified disaster recovery or mitigation tasks, beginning June 1, 2027.
- 3) Specifies the intent of the Legislature in enacting this bill.
- 4) Specifies that the training may be developed or administered by a nonprofit or private entity with professional experience related to human trafficking.
- 5) Requires the training to be delivered in the language that is the most widely spoken language among the employees that will receive the training and must include examples and case scenarios relevant to how trafficking occurs at designated disaster sites and designated mitigation sites.

COMMENTS

1. The troubling prevalence of human trafficking

Human trafficking is the world's fastest growing criminal enterprise, bringing in annual profits in the tens of billions of dollars. Human trafficking is generally defined as the use of force, coercion, or fraud to obtain coerced labor or personal services. Existing law provides that any person who deprives or violates the personal liberty of another with the intent to obtain forced labor or services is guilty of the crime of human trafficking.

The International Labour Organization estimates that approximately 40 million people were victims of some form of human slavery worldwide in 2016.¹ This includes 24.9 million people in forced labor, meaning they were being "forced to work under threat or coercion as domestic workers, on construction sites, in clandestine factories, on farms and fishing boats, in other sectors, and in the sex industry." Over 70 percent of these victims were women and girls and one in four victims were children. In their 2019 Data Report, the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline identified over 22,000 victims and survivors and over 4,300 traffickers.²

¹ *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery* (2017) International Labour Organization, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf. All internet citations are current as of May 30, 2026.

² *2019 Data Report*, U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline, <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/sites/default/files/Polaris-2019-US-National-Human-Trafficking-Hotline-Data-Report.pdf>.

Traffickers look for people who are susceptible for a variety of reasons, including psychological or emotional vulnerability, economic hardship, lack of a social safety net, membership in a marginalized group, natural disasters, or political instability. Human trafficking is often described as a hidden crime as victims rarely come forward to seek help due to a variety of factors, including language barriers, the severe trauma resulting from these crimes, fear of the traffickers, and fear of law enforcement.

2. California's human trafficking awareness and training law

To increase awareness of human trafficking and provide support to victims, Civil Code Section 52.6 requires certain businesses and establishments, including truck stops, health facilities, massage parlors, and transit centers, to post notices encouraging victims of human trafficking and those who suspect human trafficking to contact a textline or one of several hotlines to access help and services. The law requires the notice to state specified content and requires the Department of Justice to post a model notice.

In addition, several laws, SB 970 (Atkins, Ch. 842, Stats. 2018) and AB 2034 (Kalra, Ch. 812, Stats. 2018), established training requirements for specified employees. AB 2034 amended Section 52.6, requiring businesses that operate intercity passenger rail, light rail, or bus stations to train certain employees in recognizing the signs of human trafficking and how to report those signs.

SB 970 also added Section 12950.3 to the Government Code, which required such employee trainings at hotels and motels. SB 970 also explicitly stated that it was the intent of the Legislature in enacting the bill “to establish a minimum threshold for human trafficking awareness training and education.”

SB 630 (Stern, Ch. 57, Stats. 2019) made clear that Section 52.6, and the requirements set out therein, do not prevent local governing bodies from adopting and enforcing a local ordinance, rule, or regulation to prevent slavery or human trafficking. It further provided that Section 52.6 does not supersede or preempt a local ordinance, rule, or regulation that duplicates or supplements the requirements Section 52.6 imposes upon businesses and other establishments. The addition of this clause paved the way for local jurisdictions to take more aggressive approaches to combatting the scourge of human trafficking in California.

AB 1661 (Davies, Ch. 106, Stats. 2022) required businesses that provide hair, nail, electrolysis, and skin care services, and other related businesses or establishments subject to regulation under the Barbering and Cosmetology Act to post the required notice above in a conspicuous place near the public entrance of the establishment or in another conspicuous location in clear view of the public and employees where similar notices are customarily posted. AB 1740 (Sanchez, Ch. 104, Stats. 2023) added pediatric care to the list of establishments that must post the human trafficking notice.

3. Another expansion of Section 52.6

This bill takes another step forward by requiring privately operated entities in a designated disaster site or a designated mitigation site to post the notice regarding slavery and human trafficking. Additionally, the bill requires a privately operated entity that operates in a designated disaster site or designated mitigation site to provide at least 20 minutes of training to specified employees involved in disaster recovery or mitigation tasks in the most widely spoken language among the employees that will receive the training.

According to the author:

AB 2101 affirms that California will not allow disaster sites to become breeding grounds for labor abuse. The workers who step in during times of crisis – utility crews, debris removal teams, construction workers, electricians, roofers, and day laborers – are essential to rebuilding communities and restoring normalcy after climate emergencies. When unscrupulous employers exploit these workers by threatening them with ICE or exploitation to silence or coerce them, it is not only unethical – it constitutes trafficking. By expanding “Know Your Rights” protections and strengthening safeguards at disaster recovery worksites, AB 2101 ensures that those on the front lines of rebuilding are protected, informed, and treated with dignity and respect. As climate-related disasters grow more frequently and immigration enforcement actions intensify, the need for proactive worker protection becomes increasingly urgent. This bill is a critical first step toward closing a dangerous gap in California’s anti-trafficking framework.

The Sunita Jain Anti-Trafficking Initiative at Loyola Law School, sponsors of the bill, write the following in support of the AB 2101:

California now leads the nation, with roughly 136 formal establishments providing Natural Disaster and Emergency Relief Services and employing more than 3,000 workers. As disasters become more frequent, the sector continues to expand, with employment rising at an annualized rate of 6.8% from 2020 to 2025.

Despite the essential role they play, the workers who support rebuilding efforts after natural disasters face widespread issues of wage theft, exposure to hazardous conditions without proper training or PPE, and are 2x as likely to be trafficked compared to workers at non disaster worksites. Individuals who lack clear information about their rights, or fear retaliation, are less likely to report abuse. Bad actors exploit this silence.

The abuses and risks that disaster restoration workers have long faced are now further compounded with unprecedented federal immigration enforcement - Often working outdoors in plain sight and hired in informal or temporary capacities, these community members are particularly vulnerable to ICE raids. Further, unethical employers and supervisors increasingly exploit the threat of immigration enforcement to coerce workers into unpaid labor, force them into jobs they did not agree to perform, and force them to remain in exploitative and unsafe working conditions.

[. . .] AB 2101 marks an important first step toward addressing the documented pattern of abuse and trafficking across the disaster restoration industry. AB 2101 amends Civil Code § 52.6 to require the posting of “Know Your Rights (KYR)” and Human Trafficking Hotline information at designated disaster sites and at businesses that hire or deploy disaster-response workers. Further, the bill also establishes standardized training requirements within the disaster restoration industry to ensure workers and supervisors understand these protections and how to identify these red flags in the field.

California has addressed similar abuses in other high-risk industries through Civil Code § 52.6, which requires KYR postings in businesses and establishments that are impacted by human trafficking. Since 2013, the law has expanded to cover 15 industries, most recently adding emergency departments and pediatric facilities in 2024.

SUPPORT

Sunita Jain Anti-trafficking Initiative at Loyola Law School (sponsor)
3Strands Global Foundation
Central Valley Justice Coalition
Community Lawyers, Inc.
Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto
Jobs to Move America
Little Hoover Commission
Pilipino Workers Center of Southern California
Public Citizen
Thai Community Development Center
TransLatin@ Coalition
Worksafe

OPPOSITION

None known

RELATED LEGISLATION

Pending Legislation:

AB 1845 (Krell, 2026) requires postsecondary education institutions to offer as part of the institution's sexual harassment training specified training regarding human trafficking. AB 1845 is in the Senate Rules Committee.

AB 1918 (Dixon, 2026) requires body art facilities, as defined, to post the notice regarding slavery and human trafficking. The bill requires a business or other establishment that operates a body art facility to provide at least 20 minutes of training in recognizing the signs of human trafficking and how to report those signs to the appropriate law enforcement agency to registered practitioners who practice in the body art facility and who may interact with, or come into contact with, a victim of human trafficking or who are likely to receive a report from an employee of the business or establishment about suspected human trafficking.

Prior Legislation:

AB 1740 (Sanchez, Ch. 104, Stats. 2023) *See* Comment 2.

AB 1661 (Davies, Ch. 106, Stats. 2022) *See* Comment 2.

AB 1788 (Cunningham, Ch. 760, Stats. 2022) established a cause of action against hotels for failing to report known sexual trafficking within the hotel, as specified, or where an employee benefits from sexual trafficking activity within the hotel, as specified.

SB 630 (Stern, Ch. 57, Stats. 2019) *See* Comment 2.

SB 970 (Atkins, Ch. 842, Stats. 2018) *See* Comment 2.

AB 2034 (Kalra, Ch. 812, Stats. 2018) *See* Comment 2.

SB 225 (Stern, Ch. 565, Stats. 2017) updated language that is required to be included in notices certain businesses must post. It included a special textline that can be texted for services and support.

SB 597 (Leyva, Ch. 570, Stats. 2017) allowed victims of human trafficking to participate in the Secretary of State's Safe at Home program.

AB 260 (Santiago, Ch. 547, Stats. 2017) included hotels, motels, and other lodging establishments among the businesses that must post signage regarding reporting human trafficking.

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AB 1227 (Bonta, Ch. 558, Stats. 2017) required human trafficking prevention education in schools.

SB 1193 (Steinberg, Ch. 515, Stats. 2012) added Section 52.6 to the Civil Code.

PRIOR VOTES:

Assembly Floor (Ayes 75, Noes 0)

Assembly Appropriations Committee (Ayes 11, Noes 1)

Assembly Emergency Management Committee (Ayes 6, Noes 1)

Assembly Judiciary Committee (Ayes 12, Noes 0)
