

July 10, 2023

The Honorable Anna Caballero  
The Honorable Shannon Grove  
The Honorable Susan Rubio  
California State Capitol  
Sacramento, California 95814

**Re: SB 14 – as amended 4/27/23**  
**OPPOSE**

Dear Senators Grove, Caballero & Rubio:

American Civil Liberties Union California Action regrets to inform you of our respectful opposition to your SB 14, which would make human trafficking a “strike” under the Three Strikes Law. While we share your goal of community safety, the evidence shows that increased punishment is the wrong policy approach.


The federal government has suggested effective ways to fight human trafficking.<sup>1</sup> SB 14 does not advance any of these approaches. Instead, SB 14 takes a punishment-only approach that disregards the already lengthy sentences imposed after a conviction for human trafficking.

By opposing SB 14, ACLU Cal Action is not arguing against accountability. Human trafficking is already punishable under sentencing schemes that include 5, 8, and 12 years for forced labor; 8, 14, and 20 years for forced sexual acts; and even life imprisonment. (Pen. Code sec. 236.1.) These sentences are often further enhanced by sentence enhancements.

Our opposition is rooted in the evidence that demonstrates that SB 14 will not serve the authors’ goals of “strengthen[ing] protections for the millions of victims of sex and labor trafficking and serve as a deterrent[.]” The research demonstrates that survivors need services and assistance, not increased incarceration expenses.<sup>2</sup> Further, longer prison sentences do not meaningfully deter crime.<sup>3</sup> Effective policy approaches include investing in education and awareness campaigns so that community members can act to identify and support individuals who are at risk of human trafficking. SB 14 takes the wrong approach to public safety as it would monopolizing resources that would be better used to invest in fostering safe homes and neighborhoods, addressing vulnerabilities during health care visits, and other supports that survivors and at-risk individuals deserve.

For these reasons, ACLU California Action must oppose SB 14.

Respectfully,

  
Carmen-Nicole Cox  
Director of Government Affairs

  
Duke Cooney  
Legislative Advocate

cc: Members and Committee Staff, Assembly Committee on Public Safety

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State, [20 Ways You Can Help Fight Human Trafficking](#) (recommending awareness-raising approaches, mentoring, and victim assistance).

<sup>2</sup> Center for Disease Control, [Sex Trafficking](#) (recommending addressing exploitation after it occurs).

<sup>3</sup> National Research Council (2014) *The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Exploring Causes and Consequences* Committee on Causes and Consequences of High Rates of Incarceration.