



County Administrative Office
Governmental & Legislative Affairs

Josh Candelaria
Director

March 14, 2016

The Honorable Holly Mitchell, Chair
California State Senate Health and Human Services Budget & Fiscal Review
Subcommittee
State Capitol, Room 5019
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support to Children who are Commercially Sexually Exploited: \$19.7 million

Dear Chairwoman Mitchell:

The County of San Bernardino is writing to urge your support in fiscal year 2016-17 to protect and serve child victims of commercial sexual exploitation through California's child welfare services system. The proposed funding augmentation of \$19.7 million will provide much needed resources to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). This is a national and statewide epidemic that deserves our highest attention and proposed funding will enable child welfare agencies to effectively meet new federal mandates and serve the needs of this unique population.

The County of San Bernardino works collaboratively with law enforcement, probation, education, mental health, public health, local non-profits, and others to leverage resources to serve this population. CSEC victims suffer from horrific and severe forms of physical, emotional and sexual abuse. This results in severe trauma to the victim that requires intensive services to protect the victim from their perpetrators and help them in their long journey to recovery. Effectively serving the CSEC population requires that services are delivered through a targeted and multi-disciplinary approach.

New federal and state mandates require child welfare agencies to develop and implement local protocols to identify foster youth who are victims of CSEC and link these youth to appropriate services. While our county has taken steps to serve CSEC victims through the development of local interagency response protocols, additional resources are needed to implement our protocols and effectively serve these youth.

Once identified, victims need crisis stabilization and often have physical health needs that require immediate attention. They need safe housing with enhanced supervision and support to protect them from their perpetrator. Their perpetrators controlled everything and their victims often were left with nothing of their own, requiring emergency clothing, toiletries, and basic living supplies. These complex cases also require multi-disciplinary teams to meet frequently and quickly to leverage resources and coordinate services, and specially-trained social work staff in the child welfare agency to facilitate this process.

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We greatly appreciate the Legislature's and Administration's investment of \$14 million in the 2015-16 budget year to begin to build capacity in local child welfare systems. An increase of \$19.7 million will enable our county to more effectively serve CSEC victims and ensure other counties can join in this important effort.

For these reasons, the County of San Bernardino thanks you for your support of additional funding to help victims of commercial sexual exploitation. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Josh Candelaria, Director of Governmental and Legislative Affairs at (909) 387-4821 or jcandelaria@sbcounty.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Ramos', with a stylized flourish at the end.

JAMES RAMOS
Board of Supervisors Chairman
Third District Supervisor
County of San Bernardino

c: Members and Consultants, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee 3 on
Health and Human Services
County of San Bernardino Legislative Delegation