

- SUBJECT:** Establishes a governor’s program for victims of child sex trafficking
- COMMITTEE:** State Affairs — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Cook, Farney, Farrar, Geren, Harless, Huberty, Kuempel, Minjarez, Oliveira
- 0 nays
- 4 absent — Giddings, Craddick, Smithee, Sylvester Turner
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 29 — 31-0
- WITNESSES:** No public hearing
- BACKGROUND:** Under Penal Code, ch. 20A, it is a crime to knowingly traffic a child and by any means cause the trafficked child to engage in or become victim of certain prohibited conduct, including prostitution, sexual assault, and promotion of child pornography. It is also a crime for a person to receive a benefit from participating in a venture that involves one of the prohibited activities or to engage in sexual conduct with a child trafficked in the manner described above.
- According to data from federal authorities, more than 100,000 children become victims of commercial sexual exploitation each year in the United States. Victims of child trafficking experience intense trauma, and comprehensive victim services play a critical role in their rehabilitation and treatment.
- DIGEST:** SB 1708 would establish a program through the governor’s office for providing comprehensive, individualized services to address the rehabilitation and treatment needs of child sex trafficking victims.
- The governor would appoint a director of the program who would be required to coordinate with state and local law enforcement agencies, state agencies, and service providers to identify victims of child sex trafficking

eligible to receive services under the program.

For every identified child victim, the program would be required to immediately facilitate the assignment of a caseworker to coordinate with local service providers on creating a customized package of services to fit the victim's immediate and long-term rehabilitation and treatment needs. These services would be required to address all aspects of the medical, psychiatric, psychological, safety, and housing needs of the victim.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2015, and the program would be established and its director named no later than December 1, 2016.

NOTES:

The Legislative Budget Board estimates the bill would have a negative fiscal impact of \$4 million in general revenue related funds during fiscal 2016-17.