



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Supervisors Ask for Better Enforcement of Motels Receiving County Funds to Prevent Human Trafficking**

Motels that receive Los Angeles County vouchers to house homeless people must comply with new rules to prevent the trafficking of women and children on their premises.

Prompted by reports of sex trafficking and other crimes occurring at many motels around the county, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the motion, co-authored by Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Don Knabe, which will require motel owners to sign a contract stating that they will not participate in or allow any form of sex trafficking to take place in their facilities. In addition, they must hang a poster in a visible place with hotline information to report a possible human trafficking incident and for victims to receive help; allow law enforcement to check guest registries at-will and take a training session on sex trafficking provided by the County.

“There are few more disturbing issues than the buying and selling of children for sex. Unfortunately, much of this activity occurs in motels and hotels. If motels are going to

receive a county voucher, they must fulfill their end of the contract,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. “We simply cannot and will not turn a blind eye.”

Added Supervisor Knabe, “I encourage those hotel operators that receive County housing vouchers to join us in the fight against the trafficking of young girls. I look forward to continued discussions as to how we can reach this goal.”

Last year, Los Angeles County spent nearly \$4 million in vouchers for 52 motels. District Attorney Jackie Lacey testified at the hearing and noted that her office has aggressively pursued cases against traffickers and has sought to help victims through a diversion program.

“This motion will assist law enforcement officials looking for kids who are being enslaved by sex traffickers,” she said. “Signs posted in lobbies may also encourage enslaved minors or good Samaritans and bystanders to call the hotline to seek help and rescue these kids.”

Compton Mayor Aja Brown also testified adding, “Gangs look at children as merchandise. It is imperative that we take a stand collectively... against modern day slavery.”

Kim Biddle, executive director of Saving Innocence, a non-profit that offers services to victims of trafficking, also testified. She said that 100 percent of the children in her care had been abused and held against their will at hotels or motels across the county.

“These hotels are truly being used to harbor trafficking victims... for intensive commercial exploitation and rape,” she said. “It should be a high priority to take a look at the accountability of these motels and hotels, especially if the county is in contract with them or awarding them any kind of funding and support.”

The Department of Public Social Services, which issues the vouchers, will compile a report and bring it back to the Board for review next month. It should include other housing options and ways of enforcing the contract in cooperation with law enforcement and victim service providers.

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