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Attorney General Becerra Joins Civic Leaders to Support First-in-the-Nation Education and Training in Schools to Prevent Human Trafficking

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SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today joined Assemblymember Rob Bonta (D-Oakland), Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg, and representatives from the California Department of Education, California Department of Social Services, California Teachers Association, and 3Strands Global Foundation to announce the implementation of Assembly Bill 1227, the Human Trafficking Prevention Education and Training Act (AB 1227).

AB 1227 was signed into law on October 7, 2017, making California the first state to adopt education and training for teachers and students to prevent human trafficking. Attorney General Becerra, joined by the California Department of Education, recently sent a letter to school districts outlining the new requirements under the law.

“Once again, California is first in the nation, this time when it comes to implementing education in our schools to prevent human trafficking. We owe many thanks to the civic and community leaders who made this day possible,” **said Attorney General Becerra.** “Here in California, we take the fight against human trafficking seriously. We know that education is key to keep our children out of the reach of labor or sex traffickers.”

“AB 1227 has made California a national and global leader in the fight against human trafficking,” **said Assemblymember Rob Bonta (D-Oakland).** “By combatting human trafficking at the root with preventative education, we can not only identify students who are actively being trafficked, but also reduce the chances that other children could fall prey to buyers or traffickers.”

“In true California fashion, our state leadership has come together to create an innovative approach to attacking the problem of human trafficking,” **said Ashlie Bryant, CEO and Co-Founder of 3Strands Global Foundation.** “AB 1227 sets the stage for a first-of-its-kind, statewide prevention education program that helps teachers spot trafficking and empowers students to avoid victimization.”

Attorney General Becerra, the state's chief law enforcement officer, has made combatting human trafficking a top priority. Earlier this month, he announced that CA DOJ special agents arrested a Sacramento woman for her alleged involvement in an

international sex trafficking ring. Yun Escamilla was booked into the Sacramento County Jail on five counts of felony pandering.

In July, Attorney General Becerra filed 54 felony charges related to sex trafficking against Quinton Brown, Gerald Turner, and Mia McNeil, following a six-month investigation by the Tulare County Sheriff's Department, LA Sheriff's Department, LA Regional Human Trafficking Task Force, and the CA Department of Justice. In January, Brown and Turner pled guilty to multiple felony charges of sex trafficking of minors. Under the terms of the plea agreement, Brown is expected to serve a 28-year sentence, and Turner is expected to serve an 11-year sentence. The third defendant, Mia McNeil, is expected back in court on February 26.

In August of 2017, in a prosecution brought by the California Attorney General's Office, the Sacramento County Superior Court denied certain motions to dismiss filed by the defendants in the Backpage.com case, thus allowing Attorney General Becerra to prosecute Carl Ferrer, James Larkin and Michael Lacey on 25 felony counts. The defendants are charged with money laundering and conspiracy utilizing Backpage.com as a multi-million-dollar online sex trafficking hub. A month later, in September, Attorney General Becerra traveled to Washington, DC, to testify before the US Senate to advance legislation that would support the efforts of state attorneys general to prosecute sex traffickers.

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