

BRIAN MAIENSCHIN

MEMBER FOR THE 77TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



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Maienschein and local child advocates call on state Legislature to pass first-in-the-nation bill that aims to crush sex trafficking industry

In San Diego County alone, sex trafficking has grown to become an \$810 million a year enterprise

San Diego, CA – In a pioneering effort to dismantle the sex trafficking industry here in San Diego and across the state, Assemblymember Brian Maienschein and child advocates today called on the state Legislature to approve a new law that would give state and local governments the power to sue and obtain large sums of money from both the men who pay to rape children and their child trafficking enablers.

The Commercial Child Rape Prevention Act (AB 1495), introduced by Maienschein and sponsored by the Children's Advocacy Institute of the University of San Diego, is expected to be considered by the Assembly Judiciary Committee on April 18th.

"This new law will dramatically expand our ability to take down sex traffickers who prey on vulnerable children and force them into prostitution," said Maienschein, who has made this issue one of his top priorities since joining the Assembly in 2012. "Our goal is not just to reduce the spread of sex trafficking, but to drive this despicable industry out of business."

In San Diego County alone, sex trafficking is an \$810 million a year business, according to a study released last year by the University of San Diego and Point Loma Nazarene University. Across the county, it is estimated that 110 gangs have members engaged in profiting from sex trafficking – many who earn in excess of \$500,000 a year.

"Sadly, this is a very lucrative and organized business with thousands of hidden victims," said Robert C. Fellmeth, executive director of the Children's Advocacy Institute. "This bill gives public prosecutors the kinds of weapons that are routinely used effectively to fight commercial fraud where they can financially cripple these criminals and the networks they operate within."

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Specifically, AB 1495:

- Permits suits with significant monetary penalties (up to \$50,000 per act), restitution and attorneys fees. The money can be collected and then used to assist victims in obtaining needed trauma treatment and in attaining self sufficiency into adulthood.
- Permits public prosecutors to use the same powers they have to stop commercial unfair competition: the ability to disgorge all the revenue collected by pimps and the commercial operations often involved, the assessment of steep civil penalties of \$50,000 for each act violating the law, and other remedies.
- The remedy allows wholesale filings against all of those connected with these depraved commercial operations at one fell swoop, rather than relying on undercover taped conversations one trick at a time.
- Creates strong "restraining orders" to protect sex trafficked victims from further contact with their predators.
- Ensures protections for sex trafficked victims when they are required to testify against their perpetrators in court.

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