



February 20, 2019

Assembly Member Reginald Jones-Sawyer, Chair
Committee on Public Safety
1020 N Street, Room 111
Sacramento, CA 94249-0048

**RE: AB-135 (Cervantes) Sex crimes: communication with a minor.
AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Assembly Member Jones-Sawyer:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 5,000 California pediatricians strongly supports bill AB 135 (Cervantes) adding human trafficking to the list of specified offenses about which contacting or communicating with a minor is a crime.

Close to 33% of human trafficking victims worldwide are children. Trafficking is a violation of their basic human rights. These exploited youths commonly suffer devastating health consequences. Trafficked children are at increased risk of injury, malnutrition, sexual assault, infectious diseases, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. Victims of sexual exploitation are also more likely to struggle with substance misuse and to suffer from untreated chronic medical conditions and mental health disorders.

California is one of the largest sites of human trafficking in the United States. According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, in 2017 there were 2,171 calls and 705 cases reported to the hotline in California. Out of the 705 cases, 544 were in the form of sex trafficking, 95 were labor exploitation, 27 cases were sex trafficking and labor exploitation and 39 were unspecified. Out of the 705 cases, 226 were minors.

California's Proposition 83 made it a crime for a person to contact or communicate with a minor, or attempt to contact or communicate with a minor, when the person knows or reasonably should know that the person being contacted is a minor, with the intent to commit one of a list of specified offenses, including kidnapping and rape. This bill would expand the list of specified offenses to include human trafficking of the minor.

AB 135 (Cervantes) would help protect California's children from human trafficking by adding it to the list of specific offenses about which communicating with or contacting a minor is a crime.

Pediatricians across the state urge you to vote AYE on AB 135 (Cervantes). Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,

Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer
American Academy of Pediatrics, California
Cc: AAP-CA Leadership; Lobbyist Lydia Bourne