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April 9, 2024

The Honorable Aisha Wahab, Chair
Senate Committee on Public Safety
1020 N Street, Room 545
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1414 (Grove), Revisions to the Penal Code to strengthen protections for minors who are victims of human trafficking – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Wahab,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong support for SB 1414 (Grove), which would make it a felony to solicit, agree to engage in, or engage in any act of commercial sex with a minor. The bill will also help strengthen protections for victims of sex trafficking by making perpetrators subject to the Sex Offender Registration Act.

California consistently ranks number one in the nation in human trafficking cases reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline. The California Attorney General notes that California is one of the largest sites for human trafficking in the United States, recognizes the serious nature of this crime, and has defined it as "modern day slavery." Human trafficking is among the world's fastest growing criminal enterprises and is estimated to be a \$150 billion-a-year global industry allowing criminals to profit from the exploitation of our most vulnerable populations.

SB 1414 will give a voice to the countless victims that have suffered from this horrific abuse. These changes to the Penal Code will enhance the fight to protect victims, strengthen prevention, and increase the prosecution of those who buy minors for sex. This bill helps send a clear message that California will prosecute these horrendous crimes by making buyers equally culpable to traffickers.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors respectfully requests that you vote **YES** on **SB 1414**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Couch", is written over a horizontal line.

David Couch, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Committee on Public Safety
Honorable Members, Kern County Legislative Delegation
California State Association of Counties
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange