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Betsy Butler

March 22, 2016

The Honorable Nora Campos
Assemblymember, District 27
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Assembly Bill 1762 (Campos) – Support

Dear Assemblymember Campos:

On behalf of the California Women's Law Center (CWLC), I am writing in support of AB 1762, which would allow human trafficking victims to vacate their convictions from crimes their traffickers forced them to commit.

Trafficking victims are often perceived as uncooperative when they encounter law enforcement because they do not feel safe revealing information about their traffickers or their circumstances. As a result, victims are arrested for crimes they committed under coercion, and then later forced to carry the stigma of their criminal records throughout their lives. Criminal convictions pose significant barriers to employment and housing, and can preclude access to vital supportive services. Consequently, many human trafficking victims are unable to receive valuable resources that could enable them to live more healthy and productive lives.

AB 1762 would enact several measures allowing human trafficking victims to clear their criminal records. One such measure would create a presumption that convictions for sex crimes committed when the trafficking victim was under 18 years old were the direct result of human trafficking, requiring the resulting conviction to be vacated. The bill also extends to trafficking victims the same options for sealing arrest and court records that are currently provided for factually innocent persons wrongly convicted of crimes.

CWLC is dedicated to eliminating the barriers that keep women and girls in poverty. Since its founding in 1989, CWLC has worked to advance the potential of women and girls through transformative litigation, policy advocacy, and education. An important part of our mission is to ensure that victims of crime, especially those crimes that disproportionately affect women and girls, have access to justice and the resources necessary to assist them in their recovery.

The California Women's Law Center strongly supports AB 1762, which will give human trafficking victims a better chance of being able to rebuild and regain control over their lives.

Sincerely,



Betsy Butler
Executive Director