

Communication from Public

Name: California Hotel & Lodging Association
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Comments for Public Posting: Please see the attached comment letter submitted on behalf of the California Hotel & Lodging Association.



LYNN S. MOHRFELD, CAE
President + CEO

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***Protecting the
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hotel industry***

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October 9, 2023

Honorable Members
Los Angeles City Council
200 N Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Motion Requesting Report on Human Trafficking Prevention Efforts

Dear Honorable Members,

On behalf of over 6,000 hotels and lodging properties represented by the California Hotel & Lodging Association (CHLA), I write with great enthusiasm to highlight the efforts our collective industry has undertaken to stop human trafficking.

CHLA Partnered with a Professional Training Program to Create a Free Service for Hotels to Train Employees to Identify Human Trafficking and Partners with Local Law Enforcement Officials to Create Meaningful and Effective Prevention Pathways

By the very nature of our business, hotels welcome thousands of diverse people each year at all times of day. In short, this means our members are on the frontlines in the fight against human trafficking. This fight centers largely around knowledge – our members do not want human traffickers in their hotels and eagerly want to help aid victims of trafficking. However, many hotels historically struggled to identify the signs of trafficking and did not initially know how to react when a suspected incident was identified.

In response to this need, CHLA partnered with Businesses Ending Slavery & Trafficking (BEST) to provide free human trafficking prevention training resources to our member hotels. This program teaches frontline employees to identify actions which are key indicators of human trafficking as well as how to respond to suspected trafficking in a manner which will both protect the victim from immediate harm while ensuring law enforcement has the information they need to intervene in the situation.

This program has been wildly successful, with some hotels reporting that their employees accurately identified human trafficking situations and helped authorities intervene within just days of their training.

In addition to our free human trafficking prevention training, CHLA also partners with district attorneys and law enforcement officials across the state to provide additional training to hoteliers and to help foster relationships between hotels and the appropriate law enforcement personnel.

CHLA Partnered with State Legislators to Pass Training Requirements

In 2018, CHLA partnered with Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins to pass Senate Bill 970, a measure which requires hotels to provide human trafficking prevention training to all employees likely to come into contact with a human trafficking victim and to renew the training every two years. This landmark legislation, combined with CHLA's partnership with BEST, helped set the stage for an awareness campaign which has yielded meaningful results and significantly reduced human trafficking in our properties.

According to data from the National Human Trafficking Hotline, incidents of human trafficking in hotels decreased 16% within just one year of the passage of SB 970. Comparatively, incidents of human trafficking in massage parlors increased by 36%.

A broader analysis of the data shows that, while the frequency rate in California hotels decreased, the total frequency in other sectors increased as a whole. The hotel industry's education-first approach works, and existing programs are only improving.

CHLA's National Partners Developed a Campaign to Promote Prevention Efforts Across the Country

At the national level, one of our counterpart groups (the American Hotel and Lodging Association) has launched a campaign called "No Room for Trafficking" which aims to fulfill many of the objectives present in CHLA's state and local campaigns. By promoting the effectiveness of human trafficking prevention training and reducing barriers to access, such as cost and availability, the No Room for Trafficking Campaign has brought educational and prevention resources to hotels across the nation.

When major events are anticipated, such as the Superbowl or Olympics, AHLA partners with local associations and public safety professionals to amplify local promotion and availability of training resources. These efforts continue to generate impressive results in cities across the nation.

Conclusion

We appreciate this opportunity to highlight our work and further discussions about how to identify and protect victims of human trafficking. CHLA strongly believes education remains the best tool to identify and intervene in human trafficking situations. To that end, we are proud of the data-proven efficacy of these efforts within the hospitality industry, and would encourage similar training programs in other industries.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Mohrfeld', written in a cursive style.

Lynn Mohrfeld
President + CEO
California Hotel & Lodging Association