



## Office of the San Diego City Attorney

**Mara W. Elliott**  
City Attorney

April 11, 2023

Assemblymember Reginald Jones-Sawyer  
Chair, Assembly Public Safety Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
1020 N Street, Room 111  
Sacramento, California 95814

*Re: Assembly Bill 1497 (Haney): Legal Justice for Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking Victims - Support*

Dear Chairman Jones-Sawyer:

The San Diego City Attorney's Office is pleased to support Assembly Bill (AB) 1497 by Assemblymember Matt Haney.

AB 1497 ensures that survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking and other violence can share their victimization stories in court and allows judges to consider these stories when making sentencing decisions.

It is common for people who are victims of human trafficking to be criminalized, and they wind up being defendants in a court of law for actions they were forced into doing. Physical abuse is often one of the tools utilized by traffickers to keep their victims in line. Too often, a survivor's trauma is used against them, ignored, or not accounted for during legal proceedings. Consequently, judges and juries are left with insufficient information when making life changing decisions on a survivor's criminal charges and sentencing.

Unfortunately, the criminalization of trafficking victims is more likely to happen to people of color.

This bill would build upon the success of AB 124, passed in 2021, which allowed courts to consider the experiences of survivors of sexual violence and human trafficking in cases of non-violent crimes. AB 1497 would close a loophole in existing law, to allow survivors of sexual violence and human trafficking, who are also victims of domestic violence, to be heard in court.

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AB 1497 expands the protections under AB 124 to elevate all survivors' stories, so that victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, and other violence have the chance to rebuild their lives and access the resources they need to heal from their trauma.

For these reasons, the San Diego City Attorney 's Office strongly supports AB 1497 (Haney) and urges you and the other members of the Assembly Public Safety Committee to pass this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mara W. Elliott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "M".

Mara W. Elliott  
San Diego City Attorney