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Date: March 29, 2019

HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS CALL ON CITY LEADERS FOR LAWS TO PROTECT THEM *Coalition Urges City of San Diego Elected Officials for Legislation to Combat Human Trafficking*

San Diego, CA – According to the Polaris National Human Trafficking Resource Center, human traffickers generate hundreds of billions of dollars in profits by enslaving millions of people in horrific situations around the world, including right here in the U.S. After drug trafficking, sex trafficking is San Diego's 2nd largest underground economy, with the industry producing 810 million dollars in annual revenue. The FBI identified San Diego as one of 13 cities in the nation designated as a high intensity child prostitution area.

"For the past two years, as the previous Chair of the City of San Diego's Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods (PS&LN) Committee, combatting human trafficking has been a top priority for my office," stated Councilmember Chris Cate. Between 2017-2018, the PS&LN Committee received regular reports and updates on what the City of San Diego is doing to collaborate with other organizations and governmental agencies to abate massage establishments engaging in human trafficking, protect victims, and hold those supporting trafficking accountable. Last year, I worked with the San Diego Police Department and stakeholders, including the California Massage Therapy Council, and introduced legislation to combat red light activity and human trafficking in the City's massage establishments. Our goal was to provide the San Diego Police Department and City Attorney's Office with the tools needed to effectively and efficiently shut down bad actors and combat human trafficking in massage establishments while lifting up the legitimate profession of massage therapy. <http://bit.ly/2OgDhO2>

"We respectfully urge the City to work expeditiously to pass and implement these common-sense changes to help combat human trafficking in our communities," said the Lynch Foundation for Children, Living Beyond the Hustle, Sisters of the Streets, and Paving Great Futures. Letter of Support: <http://bit.ly/2CzRp10>

"We look forward to supporting [the City] in this important move to prevent human trafficking in our community," stated Dr. Jamie Gates, Director, Center for Justice & Reconciliation. Letter of Support: <http://bit.ly/2U0hGQg>

"In addition to advocating for programs that support human trafficking survivors, Free to Thrive also supports, and advocates for legislation that combats human trafficking, such as the proposed changes to regulate massage establishments through revocable police permits," said Jamie Quient, President & Managing Attorney, Free to Thrive. Letter of Support: <http://bit.ly/2JT1c8C>

Collectively, the coalition is asking the City of San Diego to expeditiously pass this legislation to protect victims and survivors of human trafficking, so that all individuals can be safe and secure.