

# Policy At A Glance:

## Preventing Child Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking

*Sexual assault and human trafficking are both traumatic crimes rooted in power, control, abuse, and exploitation of individuals. In honor of National Child Abuse Awareness Month, this brief provides an overview of the Jenna Quinn Law and proposed federal legislation aimed at combatting child sexual abuse and human trafficking in the United States.*

### Introduction

April is National Child Abuse Awareness Month. The abuse of children is a serious problem, both in California and across the nation, as they can have long-term impacts on health, opportunity, and wellbeing.<sup>1,2</sup>

Children who have been abused may display a range of emotional and behavioral reactions, including an increase in nightmares or other sleeping difficulties, angry outbursts, or withdrawn behavior.<sup>3</sup>

Human trafficking is the use of force, fraud, or coercion to exploit individuals for labor or commercial sex acts. Millions, including men, women, and children, are trafficked globally, across diverse communities and demographics.<sup>4</sup> Studies have shown a strong correlation between child sexual abuse and human trafficking, with 84% of participants surveyed experiencing sexual abuse during childhood. This connection highlights how sexual abuse vulnerability can be exploited by traffickers and be used as a means of control. Recognizing this correlation is critical, emphasizing the need to integrate discussions of human trafficking and sexual awareness together.<sup>5</sup>

This brief provides an overview of the federally proposed Jenna Quinn Law (S.1147) along with Texas' Jenna's Law and two federal legislation aimed at combatting human trafficking in the United States.

### Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect<sup>1</sup>

<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	Involves subjecting a child to sexual activities, such as molestation, indecent exposure, fondling, rape, and incest.
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	Involves causing bodily harm to a child through non-accidental means, including unjustifiable punishment.
<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	Involves nonphysical mistreatment, including inflicting mental distress or jeopardizing a child's emotional wellbeing.
<b>General Neglect</b>	Occurs when a parent/guardian or caretaker negligently fails to provide sufficient food, shelter, or supervision, without causing physical injury to a child.

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## Jenna's Law and the Jenna Quinn Law (S. 1147)

Named after Jenna Quinn, a survivor of sexual abuse, Jenna's Law was passed in Texas in 2009 as the first legislation in the U.S. to mandate K-12 sexual abuse training for students, school staff, and caregivers.<sup>6,7</sup> Following the enactment of Jenna's Law in Texas in 2009, a study found that educators reported incidents of sexual abuse at a rate nearly four times higher after completing training compared to their reporting rate before training.<sup>8</sup> Over time, Jenna's Law underwent amendments, requiring education for additional child serving agencies, including childcare centers, foster care centers, child placing agencies, and universities. In 2017, Jenna's Law was further amended to encompass sex trafficking prevention for students and teachers in school.<sup>6</sup> Since 2009, similar laws that mirror the principles of Jenna's Law have been adopted across the nation.<sup>8,9</sup>

The proposed Jenna Quinn Law (S. 1147) aims to authorize federal grants for evidence based training programs, supporting field-initiated innovation projects for up to five years. These programs eligible for federal grants must focus on advancing comprehensive, innovative, evidence-based, or evidence-informed, child sexual abuse awareness and prevention initiatives. The emphasis will be on improving student awareness, training educators and mandatory reporters, and providing information to parents and guardians. The proposed law also highlights the importance of coordination with local educational agencies to ensure comprehensive awareness among students, professionals, and volunteers.<sup>9,10</sup>

## Sexual Assault Awareness Month

April is also Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), a dedicated time for advocates, survivors, their supporters, and the community to engage in open conversations about sexual violence. The focus is on offering support to survivors; enhancing knowledge and awareness; and developing strategies and resources to prevent sexual violence.<sup>11</sup> Sexual violence occurs when someone is coerced into unwanted sexual activity without consent. Furthermore, it encompasses various forms, including rape, incest, child sexual abuse, intimate partner violence, human trafficking, unwanted sexual contact, and exposure.<sup>12</sup>



# Proposed Federal Legislation to Prevent Human Trafficking

## Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2023 (H.R. 5856)

In October 2000, President Bill Clinton signed the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (H.R. 3244) into law.<sup>13</sup> This bill ensured that noncitizens, regardless of immigration status, who are victims of severe forms of human trafficking in the United States are eligible for federal and state benefits and services, including Supplemental Security Income (SSI), similar to the eligibility of refugees. The law defines severe forms of trafficking to include sex trafficking induced by force, fraud, or coercion, including individuals under 10, as well as the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services.<sup>13,14,15</sup>

Passed in the U.S. House of Representatives on November 7, 2023, the Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2023 (H.R. 5856) aims to allocate approximately \$1 billion over five years to bolster and expand effective programs and laws combatting modern-day slavery. The legislation seeks to reauthorize funding through fiscal year 2028, enhancing programs, strengthening laws, and promoting accountability in the U.S. government's efforts against human trafficking. H.R. 5856 includes provisions such as providing funding for the international Megan's Law and Angel Watch program and encouraging prevention programs.<sup>16,17</sup>

## Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act (H.R. 443)

Human trafficking is a serious crime that goes against values of liberty, justice, and opportunity by targeting vulnerable people and inherently taking away their rights, freedom, and dignity. It not only affects people, but also harms community safety and economic strength.<sup>18</sup> Passed in the U.S. House of Representatives on January 10, 2024, the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act (H.R. 443) aims to ensure that the Department of Labor (DOL) staff receives the necessary training and ongoing education to identify and report instances of human trafficking to law enforcement agencies.<sup>19,20,21</sup> This bill specifically directs the DOL to institute a comprehensive plan for training and periodically retraining relevant personnel, integrating methods to detect and aid law enforcement in preventing human trafficking within their primary responsibilities.<sup>20,21</sup>

The training, whether conducted in person or virtually, will include techniques for identifying suspected victims and perpetrators, as well as location- or environment-specific training.<sup>21</sup> The Secretary of Labor is mandated to regularly report on the training and continuing education provided, the number of cases suspected of human trafficking referred to the Department of Justice and other relevant authorities, and the metrics used by employees to measure and track the DOL's response to such cases.<sup>20,21</sup>

## Conclusion

Efforts to address and prevent the intertwined challenges of child sexual abuse and human trafficking require organized, multifaceted approaches that involve awareness, education, and collaboration. The Jenna Quinn Law aims to authorize federal grants for evidence-based training programs, focusing on advancing comprehensive child sexual abuse awareness and prevention initiatives.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the Fredrick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2023, alongside the Enhancing Detection of Human Trafficking Act, seeks to raise awareness, implement preventive education programs against human trafficking, and encourage the reporting of suspected cases.<sup>17,19</sup> This comprehensive strategy highlights the importance of coordinated efforts in combatting these critical issues.

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## Did you know?

Of every 1,000 sexual assault incidents, only 310 are reported to the police.<sup>22</sup>



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Institute for Health Policy and Leadership

11209 Anderson Street  
Loma Linda, CA 92354  
Phone: 909-558-7022  
Fax: 909-558-5638  
[www.IHPL.llu.edu](http://www.IHPL.llu.edu)

Questions?

Please contact Renée Chuang, MS,  
Doctoral Graduate Assistant at the  
Institute for Health Policy & Leadership  
([RChuang@llu.edu](mailto:RChuang@llu.edu)).