County of Placer
Board of Supervisors

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April 4, 2014

Honorable Ellen Corbett, Chair
Members, Senate Budget Committee, No. 3
State Capitol Bldg., Room 5019
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Child Welfare Services: Services to Child Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Dear Senator Corbett:

On behalf of the Placer County Board of Supervisors, I urge your support for the California State Association of Counties request for $20.3 million State General Fund augmentation to better intervene with California's victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation.

Nationally, the plight of sexually exploited young people has gained the attention of policy makers, the public, and child welfare agencies. Light has been shed on the suffering of these children and the challenges we face in California to serve this unique population. The majority of child sexual exploitation victims have suffered extensive abuse and trauma with points of contact with the child welfare system.

Victims of commercial sex trafficking are seen throughout California as children are transported along major freeways and across state borders, including through Placer County. As a result, child welfare agencies across the state are struggling to address this epidemic. Victims have unique needs that require coordination and support from other systems – including mental health, public health, law enforcement, community providers and probation. California's child welfare agencies lack the tools and resources to adequately serve and protect victims of this heinous crime.

Training is needed for child welfare workers, foster caregivers (foster homes and group homes), and youth to recognize the risk factors and signs of sexual exploitation and trauma and to determine if a youth is at risk for exploitation.

Placer stands ready to build on its unique integrated model and leverage the resources of all Systems of Care partner agencies to better serve youth victims. Placer is home to Courage House, one of the few private agencies which is prepared to help victims heal. Courage House is an agency which serves victims with unique mental health services and delivery of the life-saving healing to victims, protecting them from further harm. Without adequate resources and technical knowledge at the local level, many impacted youth can languish in delinquency court without the help they need.

We support the requested $20.3 million statewide augmentation to fund necessary training and service providers to work with victims of commercial sex trafficking (and those at high risk). If you have questions, please contact Graham Knaus with Placer County Health and Human Services at (530) 745-3140.

Sincerely,

COUNTY OF PLACER

Jack Duran, Chairman
Placer County Board of Supervisors

CC: Placer County Board of Supervisors
Placer County State Legislative Delegation
David Boesch, Placer County CEO
Peterson Consulting