



San Diego County Sheriff's Department

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Kelly A. Martinez, Sheriff

File

July 20, 2023

Honorable Michael T. Smyth
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
San Diego Central Courthouse
1100 Union Street, Tenth Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

RECEIVED
JUL 24 2023
PRESIDING

RECEIVED
JUL 27 2023
SAN DIEGO
COUNTY GRAND JURY

Dear Judge Smyth:

**Sheriff's Department Response to San Diego County Grand Jury Report Entitled:
"AB 1227 Human Trafficking The Fight Against Child Trafficking"**

Pursuant to California Penal Code section 933(c), the following is my response to the Grand Jury's Recommendation 23-28.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

I reviewed the Grand Jury's recent report outlining their findings and recommendations related to AB 1227 The Human Trafficking Prevention Education and Training Act. I appreciate the thoughtful review and assessment made by Foreperson Ed Lopatin and members of the Grand Jury. This report indicated the members of the Grand Jury understand that prevention is an opportunity to combat human trafficking by educating our youth in the warning signs and techniques used by traffickers to lure them into trafficking.

The Grand Jury identified a single recommendation as a result of their inquiries where the Sheriff's Department could make an impact:

RECOMMENDATION 23-28:

The 2022/2023 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego Sheriff's Department, through the Human Trafficking Task Force (HTTF):

Work with the SDCOE and District Attorney's Office to make available, to all 42 school districts, human trafficking specific training (with a Law Enforcement focus) for administrators, staff, educators, and pupils, to reinforce the training provided through AB 1227.

Response:

The Sheriff's Department agrees that educating youth, parents, the community, and educators, is a key component to prevention of human trafficking of minor victims. The Sheriff's Department

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agrees with the recommendation that via the Human Trafficking Task Force, more education could be warranted. However, the recommendation will not be implemented by the Sheriff's Department because we are not the lead agency of the task force and does not have the sole authority of the mission and direction of the task force. The task force is comprised of 11 participating federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecuting agencies, with the mission being to proactively disrupt and dismantle human trafficking activities through a comprehensive and collaborative effort. The California Department of Justice (CalDOJ) is the lead agency. The Sheriff's Department participation in the task force is comprised of three investigators, and one sergeant. As our employees, they do educate and provide information to our department, educators, and non-government agencies.

The task force has worked collaboratively with San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) since at least 2021, as requested, and anticipates continuing to do so moving forward. Education is a core tenet of the task force and there is an already established relationship with the SDCOE and the school districts they work with to determine the curriculum desired, and requests are made to the task force for subject matter experts as needed.

Assigned Sheriff's HTTF staff teach Department School Resource Officers (SRO), and other school staff within our operational areas, about trends in identifying, intervening, investigating, and supporting human trafficking victims. This is particularly useful in identifying students who are at-risk for being targeted for or are already involved in human trafficking. As a result, the SROs can and do fulfill the role required under AB 1227 periodically. One reason for utilizing uniformed or clearly identifiable deputies for educational purposes is that it alleviates exposing the identities of undercover staff assigned to the HTTF to audiences or potential human trafficking suspects or victims. Successful investigations and the ability to save victims depends on the protection of those identities. Having the HTTF staff as the primary educators may not be ideal for this reason.

In closing, I would like to thank the Grand Jury for their efforts in working with the Sheriff's Department through this investigation.

If further clarification or additional discussion is needed, please feel free to contact Captain Pat Shannon of the Sheriff's Narcotics and Gang Division at (858) 285-6197.

Sincerely,



Kelly A. Martinez, Sheriff

KAM:cjc

cc: Members, Board of Supervisors
Helen Robbins-Meyer, CAO
Andrew Potter, Clerk of the Board
Ed Lopatin, Foreman, San Diego County Grand Jury