

KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

1350 Norris Road, Bakersfield, CA 93308
661.391.7500 - www.kernsheriff.org

DONNY YOUNGBLOOD
Sheriff - Coroner - Public Administrator



Issue: 26-02

TRAINING BULLETIN

DATE: February 5, 2026

Assembly Bill 379 Changes to Prostitution and Related Crimes

The purpose of this training bulletin is to inform law enforcement personnel of major changes to California law regarding prostitution-related offenses, emphasizing victim-centered approaches and compliance with updated statutes.

Subject: AB 379 – Changes to Prostitution and Related Crimes

Effective Date: January 1, 2026

Reference: California Penal Code §§ 647(b), 653.25, 236.1, 236.23

Summary of Key Points

- **AB 379 Overview:**

- Amends prostitution and related statutes to strengthen enforcement tools against commercial sex buyers, restore loitering offenses, and enhance victim support frameworks.

California Penal Code Sections Affected

- **PC § 647(b)** – Prostitution
 - Prostitution and solicitation remain misdemeanors under existing provisions.
 - Enhanced punishment applies when the solicited minor is more than 3 years younger than the defendant, includes mandatory human trafficking education upon probation.
- **PC § 647.5** – Loitering with intent to purchase commercial sex.
 - Misdemeanor, loitering criteria defined in PC 653.25.
 - Focuses on buyers (not on people engaged in prostitution).
- **PC § 653.25** – Loitering for Prostitution
 - Defines **intent to purchase commercial sex** based on observable conduct (circling known prostitution areas, repeatedly beckoning or attempting contact, etc.)
 - \$1,000 fine in addition to other penalties. Fines are deposited into the Survivor Support Fund.
- **PC § 236.1** – Human Trafficking
 - Increased penalties for traffickers; expanded definition of coercion: “Coercion” includes a scheme, plan, or pattern intended to cause a person to believe that failure to perform an act would result in serious harm to or physical restraint against any person; the abuse or threatened abuse of

the legal process; debt bondage; or providing and facilitating the possession of a controlled substance to a person with the intent to impair the person's judgment.

- **PC § 236.23** – Victim Protections
 - New section providing immunity and access to services for trafficking victims.
- **PC § Chapter 5.8 (13849)** – Survivor Support Fund
 - Establishes the Survivor Support Fund in the State Treasury.
 - Collected fines support grants for community-based organizations, victim services, and human trafficking prosecution units.
- **Civil Code 52.6 & 52.65** – Civil Penalty Enhancements
 - Notice posting requirements for airports, bus stations, health facilities, truck stops, and similar sites.
 - Civil penalties for failure to post. Proceeds go to Survivor Support Fund.

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- **Before Enforcement Action:**
 - Assess for signs of trafficking (coercion, threats, lack of freedom).
 - Prioritize victim safety and referral to services.
 - **Arrest Decisions:**
 - It is considered best practice to **not** arrest individuals who appear to be trafficking victims.
 - Document observations and notify specialized units (SVU or VECTOR units).
 - **Reporting:**
 - Include trafficking indicators in all reports.
 - Refer victims to advocacy and support programs.

References

- California Penal Code §§ 647(b), 653.25, 236.1, 236.23
- AB 379 Full Text: leginfo.legislature.ca.gov

By acknowledging this training bulletin, you are indicating you have read this training bulletin. All sworn personnel are required to review and acknowledge this training bulletin no later than **Friday, March 6, 2026**.