



SUMMARY

AB 2101 strengthens protections for disaster-response workers by requiring the posting of “Know Your Rights” and Human Trafficking Hotline information at disaster sites and establishes standardized training within the disaster restoration industry to help workers prevent human trafficking in the field.

BACKGROUND

Rebuilding efforts after natural disasters requires a flexible and highly adaptable workforce that can be mobilized quickly into working in dangerous and demanding conditions. These “second responders” or “resilience workers are the utility crews, debris removal teams, waste clean-up groups, construction workers, electricians, and day laborers. They are the workers who are integral to California’s ability to recover after a climate catastrophe. Despite the essential role they play, second responders face widespread issues of wage theft, exposure to hazardous conditions without proper training, and are twice as likely to be trafficked compared to workers at non-disaster worksites.

The abuses and risks that second responders have long faced are now further compounded with unprecedented federal immigration enforcement - often working outdoors in plain sight and hired in informal or temporary capacities, these workers are particularly vulnerable to ICE raids. Further, unethical employers and supervisors increasingly exploit the threat of immigration enforcement to coerce workers into unpaid labor, and force them to remain in exploitative and unsafe working conditions. While these problems are not new, the 2025 Los Angeles

Fires coupled with recent aggressive ICE raids have made the problems in which these workers are defrauded and trafficked more visible.

EXISTING LAW

With dispersed worksites, long subcontracting chains, minimal oversight, and a workforce that is predominately immigrant, temporary, and/or marginalized and isolated, these disaster restoration sites create fertile ground for abuse and labor trafficking.

These conditions can make it easier for bad actors to exploit workers. After a natural disaster, enforcement agencies are often stretched thin, allowing some employers and subcontractors to engage in wage theft, fraud, or even labor trafficking with little accountability.

THE SOLUTION

AB 2101 expands Civil Code § 52.6 to require the posting of Know Your Rights (KYR) and Human Trafficking Hotline information at designated disaster sites and at businesses that hire or deploy disaster-response workers. The bill also establishes standardized training requirements within the disaster restoration industry to ensure workers and supervisors understand these protections and how to identify these red flags in the field. Together, these measures provide awareness, education, and empowerment to vulnerable.

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