



State Board of Equalization

# News Release

**Vice Chairperson Jerome E. Horton**

**4<sup>th</sup> District – Los Angeles**

Ramon J. Hirsig  
Executive Director  
[www.boe.ca.gov](http://www.boe.ca.gov)

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**Contact: NR 32-10-H**  
**Leah Wyman**  
**323-980-1221**

## **Vice Chairperson Jerome E. Horton Combats Human Trafficking in California with Launch of State-Wide Training**

California State Board of Equalization (BOE) Vice Chairperson Jerome E. Horton is proud to announce the launch of his human trafficking initiative in California, which includes having investigators from all three state tax agencies trained to recognize and report signs of human trafficking. This initiative was launched in response to [a letter issued earlier this year](#) by Mr. Horton to the Directors of the three tax agencies, California's State Board of Equalization (BOE), Franchise Tax Board (FTB), and Employment Development Department (EDD). The agencies include California's State Board of Equalization, Franchise Tax Board, and Employment Development Department.

Mr. Horton said, "I am excited about the bold leadership the Directors of California's three tax agencies are taking to do their part in addressing human trafficking in our state. It is partnerships like this one that will enable us to identify employers who exploit workers and inevitably engage in illegal tax evasion by failing to pay their employment taxes and insurance, their income tax, and their sales and use tax. This is a large, and growing, part of an underground economy that has undermined California's legitimate businesses and government services for a long time. It is also a form of abuse that erodes an individual's most basic human rights."

To address this problem in California, Mr. Horton secured the services of the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Human Trafficking (CAST) to assist the state in implementing a state-wide training program for California auditors and investigators. The program includes both live and video-taped training to ensure that every investigator in California's three tax agencies is trained to recognize and report suspected cases.

Kay Buck, the Executive Director of CAST, responded, "I am thrilled Mr. Horton has created this state-wide initiative. His leadership will go along way in helping free victims enslaved within our state borders. Given that victims often have little to no opportunity to come forward and seek help, it's important for potential first responders to know the signs of slavery in order to identify victims. Providing training for agencies that have direct contact with the business community, such as the Board of Equalization, the Franchise Tax Board, and the Employment Development Department, is critical to gaining and preserving freedom."

You may report suspected trafficking crimes by calling the Department of Justice Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force Complaint Line at 888-428-7581 (voice and TTY). New laws provide options for trafficking victims regardless of immigration status. Operators have access to interpreters and can talk with callers in their own language. The service is offered on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST. After hours, recorded information is available in English, Spanish, Russian, and Mandarin.

Vice Chairperson Jerome E. Horton is the 4th District Member of the BOE, representing more than 8.5 million residents in Los Angeles County. He is also the BOE Legislative Committee Chairperson. Horton is the first African American to serve on the BOE since its inception in 1879, and the third African American constitutional

officer in California's history. Horton was appointed by the Governor and confirmed by both the Assembly and the Senate in 2009. Horton previously served as an Assembly member from 2000-2006.

The five-member California State Board of Equalization is a publicly elected tax board. The BOE collects more than \$53 billion annually in taxes and fees supporting state and local government services. It hears business tax appeals, acts as the appellate body for franchise and personal income tax appeals, and serves a significant role in the assessment and administration of property taxes. For more information on other taxes and fees in California, visit [www.taxes.ca.gov](http://www.taxes.ca.gov).

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