



State Board of Equalization

# News Release

**Chairman Jerome E. Horton**

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

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## **BOE CHAIRMAN URGES CALIFORNIANS TO FIGHT HUMAN TRAFFICKING Jerome E. Horton Works to Create Interagency Task Force**

**Sacramento** – Board of Equalization (BOE) Chairman Jerome E. Horton is urging fellow Californians to band together to combat the abusive practice of illegal human slavery and observe National Human Trafficking Awareness Day on Wednesday, January 11, 2012.

“Human trafficking erodes an individual’s most basic human rights,” said Horton. “Our increased awareness may be the key to bringing these cases to light and giving freedom to countless victims who have suffered under this horrible exploitation.”

Horton’s comments come on the heels of last weekend’s Los Angeles Freedom Walk where he told participants that it is unacceptable to have people in our own country subjected to this heinous crime, where they are confined, forced to work under threats of violence, and isolated from anyone who can help them escape.

In an effort to address this growing problem, Chairman Horton plans to sponsor legislation he hopes will eradicate human trafficking. He said this activity is a large and growing part of California’s underground economy, a crisis that robs our state of an estimated \$8 billion in revenue annually and undermines legitimate businesses.

Horton’s initiative is to create a multi-agency *California Tax Agencies Human Trafficking Task Force*, designed to increase communication between state tax agencies and streamline the sharing of information, resources and enforcement efforts. Horton is also reaching out to other state agencies and departments with similar missions to serve as partners.

This partnership’s goal is to sift out horrific situations of human slavery and trafficking by unscrupulous employers who engage in illegal tax evasion by failing to pay their employment taxes, insurance, income tax, sales and use tax.

In March 2010, Horton launched a statewide human trafficking initiative creating a partnership with the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Human Trafficking (CAST) to provide training and education for Investigators from all three state tax agencies, Board of Equalization (BOE), the Franchise Tax Board (FTB) and the Employment Development Department (EDD), to recognize signs of human trafficking. The training has empowered them to proactively assist in state and national efforts to eradicate human trafficking.

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“We applaud Chairman Horton’s leadership on this issue,” said Kay Buck, Executive Director of the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST). “His dedication to working on a state-wide level to address this modern-day slavery, and ensure our government is really doing all it can, is truly commendable.”

FACT: Los Angeles is one of the top three destination cities in the United States for human trafficking. California is one of the top four states. Employers who abuse workers in this way inevitably engage in illegal tax evasion that impacts sales and use taxes, income taxes, employment taxes and insurance; contributing factors to the underground economy.

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Elected in 2010, Chairman Jerome E. Horton is the Fourth District Member of the California State Board of Equalization, representing more than 8.5 million residents in Los Angeles County. He is also the Board of Equalization Legislative Committee chairman. He is the first to serve on the Board of Equalization with over 21 years of experience at the BOE. Horton previously served as an Assembly Member of the California State Assembly from 2000-2006.

The five-member California State Board of Equalization is a publicly elected tax board. The State Board of Equalization collects more than \$50 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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