



# Alliance To End Slavery & Trafficking

## **ATEST Urges California's Governor to Sign Bill Regulating Foreign Labor Recruitment**

California has often been a human rights trendsetter, and Governor Gavin Newsom has an opportunity this month to extend safeguards for temporary migrant workers who are too easily exploited in forced labor, debt bondage and other forms of severe labor abuses..

The State Assembly has passed AB 364, which ATEST has [endorsed](#), to broaden protections for foreign workers to include California's vast agricultural industries. The measure is now on the governor's desk for signature.

Ensuring that California comprehensively protects temporary migrant workers is imperative because consistent federal oversight and regulations are lacking. Unscrupulous labor recruiters and employers often act with impunity in this underregulated sector. The COVID-19 pandemic shone a light on the importance of immigrant and non-immigrant foreign workers to our economies, especially in agriculture and all along our food supply chains. We cannot deem such workers as "essential" and "heroes", and then not provide them with protections and safeguards in the workplace and in migration systems. While ATEST continues to work with Congress to enact nationwide protections, action by individual states is vital.

The governor's signature can help correct the power imbalance between temporary foreign workers and contractors who bring them into the country. This structural inequity results in extreme labor exploitation, including [documented cases](#) of human trafficking.

California can take a major step to provide desperately needed worker protection and set an example for other states to follow.

*ATEST is a U.S.-based coalition that advocates for solutions to prevent and end all forms of human trafficking and modern slavery around the world. We advocate for lasting solutions to prevent forced labor and sex trafficking, hold perpetrators accountable, ensure justice for victims and empower survivors with tools for recovery. Our collective experience implementing programs at home and abroad provides our coalition an unparalleled breadth and depth of expertise.*

*ATEST member organizations include: Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST), Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), Covenant House, Free the Slaves, HEAL Trafficking, Human Trafficking Institute, Human Trafficking Legal Center, Humanity United Action (HUA), McCain Institute for International Leadership, National Network for Youth (NN4Y), Polaris, Safe Horizon, Solidarity Center, T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, United Way Worldwide, Verité, and Vital Voices Global Partnership.*

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