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NEWS RELEASE

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District Attorney Jackie Lacey's Bill That Helps Undocumented Victims of Juvenile Crime Becomes Law

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey applauded Governor Gavin Newsom for signing a bill into law she sponsored that aids immigrants who are victims of human trafficking and other crimes committed by juveniles.

“This bill gives undocumented crime victims access to the same immigration considerations as other crime victims throughout the United States, regardless of the age of their perpetrator,” District Attorney Lacey said of the bill signed last evening. “It also gives prosecutors another tool to use to encourage undocumented victims of juvenile crime to help us bring their offenders to justice.”

Because the criminal records of juvenile offenders are confidential, their victims have been unable to receive a U- or T- visa, as provided under federal law. These visas allow victims of human trafficking and other crimes to remain and work temporarily in the United States, if they have assisted in the investigation or prosecution of their case.

Prosecutors must review juvenile records to verify the victim of a juvenile offender meets the U-visa requirements, but currently that cannot be done because the records are sealed.

Assembly Bill 2321 permits judges and prosecutors limited access to sealed juvenile records in order to certify a victim's helpfulness in an application for a U- or T- visa.

The bill was authored by Assemblyman Reggie Jones-Sawyer (D-Los Angeles). The law is effective Jan. 1.

AB 2321 was inspired by the denial of a U-visa request made by the family of a child molestation victim. The juvenile court ordered the file sealed and prosecutors were prevented from accessing records to verify the applicant was a helpful victim of the qualifying criminal act.

[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.