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Assemblymember Swanson Names Deputy District Attorney Sharmin Bock Woman Of The Year

SACRAMENTO – During a March 8, 2010 ceremony at the State Capitol, Assemblymember Sandré R. Swanson (D-Oakland) will honor Ms. Sharmin Bock, a dedicated and passionate Deputy District Attorney in the Alameda County District Attorney's Office, as the 16th Assembly District's Woman of the Year. The ceremony will recognize Bock as an exemplary Californian, along with other women from across the state, chosen by their respective state representatives.

"Sharmin has been an invaluable asset to my district, the state, and nation in bringing domestic commercial sexual exploitation of minors to a level of national discussion. We are on a rescue mission to save helpless children that are being sold into slavery across the country and Sharmin has dedicated herself, working day and night, to ensure that the laws are crafted to further this mission.

"I worked closely with Deputy DA Bock on AB 17, which increased the penalties on human traffickers and created a funding stream for programs assisting child victims suffering from the epidemic of human trafficking," said Assemblymember Swanson.

AB 17, which was enacted in 2009, increased the financial penalties on those convicted of human trafficking by 400 percent and allows law enforcement to seize assets connected to traffickers, which can greatly increase the financial loss for traffickers. Half of what is collected in those fines and seizures is now made available to community-based organizations that serve underage victims of human trafficking.

"Human trafficking has become a quiet epidemic in our country," said Assemblymember Swanson. "Ms. Bock's outspoken advocacy on behalf of child victims has taken the discussion to an unprecedented intellectual level, bringing state and federal law enforcement, lawyers, policymakers, and the public to the table to discuss the underground crime and its severe impact on our communities."

"This modern day slavery violates individual freedom and the fundamental civil rights upon which our nation was founded," said Assemblymember Swanson. "I am honored that Sharmin Bock has agreed to help my office steward additional legislation this year, AB 2319, to further tighten up our state laws on human trafficking by ensuring that children being trafficked are treated consistently under state and federal law," concluded Assemblymember Swanson.

Deputy DA Bock has an incredible history of successfully prosecuting countless serious felons over her 21-year career. She is a nationally-recognized expert in human trafficking and created and leads the Human Exploitation and Trafficking Unit in Alameda County, where she prosecutes complex human trafficking cases with a focus on sexually exploited minors. She is also the director of the new H.E.A.T. Watch program, which provides communities, prosecutors, and police departments with an innovative blueprint that they can apply nationwide to achieve the same effective results that Ms. Bock has obtained locally and that have distinguished Alameda County as a role model in combating domestic minor sex trafficking.

The Woman of the Year Ceremony is being coordinated by Assemblywoman Lori Saldaña, Chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus.

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