



AB 689 Modernizing Domestic Violence Center Crisis Hotlines

SUMMARY

This bill modernizes California code to ensure that reporting and funding for vital hotline crisis services offered by Domestic Violence centers include new text-based technology like computer chat lines and phone texting.

BACKGROUND

1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men in the United States have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner. In a single day in 2019, 81% of California domestic violence shelters served 5,644 adults and children.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has caused a dramatic increase in these already alarming rates. The stay-at-home order has forced individuals to stay indoors, meaning in many cases victims are trapped at home with their abusers. Additionally, the stay-at-home order has been associated with alcohol abuse, depression and post-traumatic stress symptoms, all of which have been linked to an increased likelihood of domestic violence in the home. The Sacramento prosecutor's office has seen a 39% increase in police activity related to domestic violence.

On a typical day before the pandemic, domestic violence hotlines received approximately 13 calls a minute. As a result of the pandemic, the National Domestic Violence Hotline saw a 9%

increase in calls, texts and chats—indicating a clear uptick in demand.

Additionally, California Domestic Violence centers have reported an increase in the use of other types of hotline services like online chatlines. As a result of the stay-at-home order, victims are in close proximity to their abusers, and many do not feel safe calling the police.

NEED FOR THE BILL

The current requirement for Domestic Violence centers is limited in its definition to phone-based hotlines. Due to this definition in the California code, Domestic Violence centers that want to provide other types of hotline services in addition to phone-based services are both unable to provide data to the state or receive funding allocations specifically for those services.

SOLUTION

By modernizing the requirements to include text-based optional services, Domestic Violence centers will be better equipped to respond to reports and help more victims of domestic violence. Additionally, the state will be better able to track and collect more accurate data about domestic abuse.

SUPPORT

California Partnership to End Domestic Violence

Human Options
Laura's House
WEAVE (Sponsor)

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