



Senate Floor Alert - AYE ON AB 557 (Rubio)

Bill Summary

AB 557 amends the Welfare and Institutions Code so as to increase support and options for domestic violence survivors who are applicants or recipients of CalWORKs by requiring counties to waive certain program requirements for families at risk of escaping a violent environment.

Existing Law

Under existing law, California fails to provide adequate safeguards to ensure that survivors of family violence who may be facing poverty aren't denied valuable services. Recipients participating in the CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work program may (at the option of the County) receive a waiver of those rules if domestic abuse resulted in an inability to participate in program requirements. Accommodations are made for housing assistance for recipients, but not applicants fleeing abuse. Good cause may be determined for other program rules, at the option of the caseworker. Current law does not require, but the CalWORKs Manual of Policies and Procedures does require that applicant and recipients are informed of services available. Nothing requires that applicants and recipients are informed of relief or services available for domestic violence survivors.

Background

In 1996, the federal government enacted sweeping welfare reform legislation for families with children replacing the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) which is administered through CalWORKs. Under that same reform included a provision called the Family Violence Option (FVO) that acknowledged the unique challenges facing survivors of family violence who live in poverty. Under current law, states may adopt the FVO as part of their TANF plan. California claims to do so, but with provisions that are only offered at the option of the county.

Details of this Bill

AB 557 was amended on July 3, 2017. With these amendments, AB 557 no longer requires waivers be available to survivors of domestic abuse. Instead, AB 557 seeks to achieve protections for applicants and recipients experiencing domestic abuse by adding the following to current law:

- (1) Requiring good cause to be determined when domestic violence has prevented a family from compliance with the CalWORKs vaccination requirement.
- (2) Requiring good cause to be determined when domestic violence has prevented

compliance with CalWORKs school participation requirement.

- (3) Requiring that an applicant fleeing abuse be determined homeless & the income and assets not counted against their application, in order to provide temporary housing assistance.
 - (4) Codifies current guidance that an applicant or recipient be informed of domestic violence services.
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SUPPORT

Western Center on Law and Poverty (Sponsor)
California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (Sponsor)
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations (Sponsor)
Black Women for Wellness (Sponsor)
CA Latinas for Reproductive Justice (Sponsor)
AAUW of California
ACT for Women and Girls
California Women's Law Center
California Domestic Workers Coalition
California Work and Family Coalition
California Employment Lawyers Association
California Partnership
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network
Career Ladders Project
Center for Relationship Abuse Awareness
Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse
Courage Campaign
Equal Rights Advocates
Esperanza Community Housing Corporation
Family Violence Appellate Project
In Our Own Voice, National Black Women's
National Council of Jewish Women, CA
Parent Voices CA
Safe Alternatives to Violent Environments (SAVE)
Strong Hearted Native Women's Coalition, Inc.
The Stronger California Advocates Network
The Popular Center for Democracy

Opportunity Institute
Voices for Progress Education Fund
Walnut Avenue Family & Women's Center
Women's Foundation of California
YWCA Glendale
Voices of Progress
UFCW, Western States Council
Rising California Together
Tradeswomen, Inc.
Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse
Asian Women's Shelter
Center for Domestic Peace
Winning Justice for Working Women
Family Violence Law Center
YMCA - CA

OPPOSITION

None on file

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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