

Calif. lawmakers restore domestic violence money

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SACRAMENTO, Calif.—The state Senate sent Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger a bill Wednesday restoring some of the money for domestic violence shelters in California after the governor eliminated their funding last summer.

Schwarzenegger used his line-item veto authority in July to cut the entire \$20.4 million allotted to the program as he cut nearly \$500 million from the revised budget passed by the Legislature. The move forced six of the state's 94 shelters to close and others to eliminate or reduce services.

"The governor absolutely supports restoring money to that program and is expected to sign that bill. But the Legislature needs to find a permanent funding source for this program," said Schwarzenegger spokesman Aaron McLearn.

The bill unanimously approved by senators restores \$16.3 million. It will restore about 70 percent of the shelters' budget once administrative costs are subtracted, said Tara Shabazz, executive director of the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence.

She said the money should be enough to reopen shelters in Madera and Nevada counties and add services in Los Angeles County's Santa Clarita Valley. The three shelters are the highest priorities, she said, because they are the only ones serving their areas of the state.

Other shelters should be able to restore some services, she said, though it is unclear if other closed shelters in Ventura County, Bakersfield and the San Francisco Bay area could reopen.

"When shelters close down...lives are at stake," state Sen. Leland Yee, D-San Francisco, said during the debate.

Yee carried the original version of the funding bill, which was mired by political infighting in the last hours of the legislative session in September. The bill sent to Schwarzenegger was instead carried by Sen. Elaine Alquist, D-Santa Clara.

"It was just really disheartening because of the petty politics that were going on," Shabazz said. Because of administrative delays it could be January before shelters see the money, she said.

The issue has drawn some celebrity attention. The musician Moby is donating the proceeds of three California concerts this week to domestic violence shelters and has urged Schwarzenegger to sign the bill.

The legislation borrows the money from the state's Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Fund, to be repaid within three years. Shabazz said shelters are searching for a permanent source of funding.

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