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Domestic Violence Fines Bill Passes Assembly in Bi-partisan Landslide

Sacramento, May 11, 2012—Yesterday the State Assembly overwhelming passed Assembly Bill 2094 (Butler) with a 74-0 vote.

AB 2094 seeks to close loopholes in existing law that can prevent California communities from collecting the fines and fees that are assessed against people convicted of domestic violence crimes. Specifically, it increases the minimum domestic violence fee from \$400 to \$500, and requires that the Court document its reasons for any instances when this fee is reduced or waived.

Current law stipulates that if a person is granted probation for a crime involving domestic violence, the defendant is required to make a minimum payment of \$400, a portion of which is allocated to local domestic violence service providers. If the Court finds that defendants are unable to pay, they may in some cases reduce or waive these minimum fees.

Data from a State audit showed that over time there has been a marked decrease in the fines assessed against defendants. Counties are not assessing the minimum fine on a consistent basis. In many instances, the fee is being reduced or waived entirely, without any documentation in the court file justifying the waiver. This means that local domestic violence agencies are not receiving the funds they're entitled to under the law, and are being denied vital resources to support their life-saving public safety work.

Tara Shabazz, executive director of the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (the Partnership), commended the Assembly for its strong support of the bill, and thanked legislators for protecting the safety and rights of domestic violence victims.

"We're very gratified by the leadership the Assembly has shown in passing AB 2094," she said. "This bill will have a real impact on statewide efforts to support victim services and increase batterer accountability. The Partnership chose to sponsor this bill because we saw how badly service providers need these funds. With this vote, the Assembly has shown that it understands the role these fees play in our efforts to prevent and end domestic violence in California."

About the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence

The California Partnership to End Domestic Violence is California's statewide domestic violence coalition, with organizational and individual members across California. Working at the local, state and national levels for nearly 30 years, the Partnership has a long track record of successfully passing over 100 pieces of legislation on behalf of domestic violence victims and their children. As the unified voice for California's domestic violence agencies, the Partnership provides statewide leadership on public policy issues, offers professional training and services to domestic violence service providers and promotes public awareness

through community outreach efforts. With offices in Sacramento, the Partnership's member programs span the entire state.

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