



For Immediate Release:

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**Four-County Audit Reveals Counties Owe Domestic Violence Shelters
Hundreds of Thousands in Backlog of Undisbursed Fees**

Sacramento, September 7, 2012 —Yesterday the California State Auditor released a report examining 4 counties (Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego and Santa Clara) on their allocation of fees collected from people convicted of domestic violence crimes. By law, counties are required to disburse a portion of these fees to local domestic violence shelters. But the report clearly shows that fees are not being consistently collected, and in some cases counties are withholding them from shelters, which are in dire need of funds.

Santa Clara County failed to disburse its domestic violence fees and built up a reserve of \$715,000. At the end of FY 2011 Sacramento County was holding \$418,000 in reserves, the equivalent of 20 months of payments. Additionally, Sacramento County is estimated to have made \$94,000 unavailable to local shelters since 2004, because of incorrect payment allocations.

Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, who requested the audit, is concerned that counties' failure to support domestic violence shelters will negatively affect public safety in their communities.

"During these tough fiscal times our most vulnerable citizens are reaching out for help and are turning to our shelters for assistance," she said. "It is unconscionable that counties are withholding funds and putting vulnerable victims at risk."

The audit reviewed payments over a four-year period in the four counties, and found that nearly 68 percent of the initial fees were not collected. In San Diego County only 12 percent were collected, the lowest of the four counties audited.

Tara Shabazz, executive director of the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (the Partnership) said she was troubled by the audit results, but not surprised.

“This audit proves what advocates have been saying for years,” she said. “Counties are not taking their responsibility to shelters seriously enough. Every dollar of domestic violence fees counties withhold or fail to collect is money we could be using to save the lives of women, men and children across the state.”

California’s domestic violence programs already lack sufficient funds to meet their communities’ needs. A one-day census of domestic violence services in 2011 showed that over 924 requests for services went unmet due to lack of resources. The Partnership thanks the Auditor and Assemblywoman Ma for revealing these problems in fee disbursement, and urges all counties to review their practices to ensure that domestic violence fees are collected and allocated appropriately.

The full report is available online at <http://www.bsa.ca.gov>.

About the Partnership

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 works to inspire, inform and connect all those concerned with this issue, because together we’re stronger. With offices in Sacramento, the Partnership’s member programs span the entire state.

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