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Bill Expanding Housing Protections for Domestic Violence Survivors Passes Senate Unanimously

Sacramento, May 2, 2013 —Today, Senate Bill 612 (Leno) passed the Senate floor with overwhelming bipartisan support in a 38-0 vote. SB 612 strengthens existing protections for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and elder or dependent abuse who must terminate their leases in order to relocate for safety reasons. The bill expands the type of documentation allowed for proof of abuse, which currently is limited to court-issued protective orders or police reports, to include documents from domestic violence and sexual assault counselors, human trafficking caseworkers, and mental health and healthcare professionals. SB 612 also adds human trafficking victims to the list of those eligible for this important protection.

The California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (the Partnership), California's state domestic violence coalition, is a proud co-sponsor of SB 612. The Partnership recognizes that victims don't always file police reports or access court services, but do seek help from other professionals not recognized under current law. Expanding the forms of allowable documentation is will help keep more California families safe.

"For domestic violence victims, being able to relocate can sometimes be a matter of life or death," said Partnership executive director Tara Shabazz. "With SB 612, victims will be able to terminate their leases quickly when they are in danger."

"Survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking often reach out to a variety of professionals when escaping a violent situation," said Senator Mark Leno, D-San Francisco, the author of SB 612. "This legislation ensures that certain health and social work experts may help survivors document abuse when it is necessary for them to break a residential lease in order to protect their own lives."

The Partnership commends the Senate for its strong support of this bill, and thanks Senator Leno for his leadership in taking on this key issue. SB 612 now heads to the Assembly for consideration.

About the Partnership

The California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (the Partnership) is California's statewide domestic violence coalition, with organizational and individual members across the state. 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. The Partnership believes that by sharing expertise, advocates and legislators can end domestic violence. Every day we 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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