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Domestic violence shelters in county close

Governor struck funding from budget, affecting all five

By [Anna Bakalis \(Contact\)](#)
Saturday, August 1, 2009



By the Numbers

Interface Children Family Services provides shelter to domestic violence victims. These are figures from 2008-09:

- 37Women who were sheltered.
- 45Children who were sheltered.
- 3,058Overnight stays by a child or adult in one of the 12 long-term transitional beds.
- 543Crisis calls received by the 211 system.
- 166New domestic violence victims referred for group counseling services.

How to help

Interface Children Family Services needs \$30,000 to reopen one shelter for a year. Donations can be sent to the agency at 1305 Del Norte Road, Suite 130, Camarillo, CA 93010. For more information, call Erik Sternad, executive director, at 485-6114, ext. 640, or visit <http://www.icfs.org>.

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All long-term shelters for victims of domestic violence have shut down in Ventura County because of a loss of state funding, leaving a dearth of safe havens for battered women and their children.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger struck from the state budget the entire \$20.4 million from the Department of Public Health's Domestic Violence Program, resulting in the closing of the county's five transitional shelters. The governor used his line-item veto authority Tuesday to cut \$656 million from the revised \$85 billion state budget, with most of the cuts coming from health and social services.

The decision to leave home can be life-saving, said Erik Sternad, executive director of Interface Children Family Services, which ran the shelters in Ventura County.

"The state of California is balancing the budget on the backs of very vulnerable women and children, who are in life or death situations," Sternad said.

Interface lost \$200,000 in the cuts, which Sternad called a "catastrophic funding loss."

Transitional shelters provide women and children a safe escape from violent home environments for up to 18 months, Sternad said, while helping women to establish employment and eventually find permanent housing.

During that time, they receive support, counseling and legal assistance as they heal from the "devastating effects of domestic violence," Sternad said.

Interface shelters in Ventura County are among a handful in the state that reported closures since the governor signed the budget, said Camille Hayes, a spokeswoman for the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence.

"This is a matter of extreme urgency for shelters and the victims that our shelters serve," Hayes said.

There are 94 domestic violence shelters and centers across the state that could be affected by the cuts.

Advocates say closing these transitional shelters will put victims more at risk as they stay in or return to abusive relationships.



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While the 18-month transitional shelters are shut, two 30-day emergency shelters remain open in Ventura County. But Interface's emergency shelter is over capacity, Sternad said.

The other 30-day shelter, operated by the Coalition to End Family Violence, is open but its counseling program was cut because of the loss of state funding, said Laura Gonzales, the coalition's director.

Gonzales said counselors serve about 200 people a month, helping them deal with feelings of guilt, low self-esteem and family trauma.

"Leaving your home and coming to a public environment, it's still a huge episode in their lives," she said.

She fears if there are any more cuts, the coalition's emergency shelter will close.

Sternad said Interface is working on a plan to reopen at least one transitional home with the help of private donations. If the nonprofit group can raise about \$30,000, it can be reopened for one year if modified to accommodate women and children for three months rather than 18. He said if \$60,000 can be raised, Interface can reopen three homes.

He said people can still call the 211 system for domestic violence services, where they can receive referrals and support.

Another shelter option is the RAIN Transitional Living Center, which provides housing for up to 70 homeless men, women and families. But RAIN, located just outside Camarillo, also is at capacity, officials said Friday.

Sternad said Interface stopped taking new clients earlier this month when it became unclear if the state would continue funding. Interface helped clients find places to live through this week.

Before Tuesday, the budget trimmed domestic violence funding by 20 percent. But when the agreement hit the governor's desk, he eliminated all the money. Schwarzenegger made the additional cuts after the Assembly rejected allowing offshore oil drilling and refused to take transportation funding from cities, resulting in a loss of about \$1.1 billion in revenues.

Catherine Duggan, director of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office's Victims' Assistance Program, said her office sees more than 6,000 crime victims a year, and about half are related to domestic violence.

"If we cannot provide them a place to go, they are left with a choice of becoming homeless while fleeing violence or staying in the home," Duggan said.

Hayes noted political leaders still could challenge the legality of Schwarzenegger's cuts.

Assembly Speaker Karen Bass, D-Los Angeles, and Senate leader Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, have questioned the legality of the line-item vetoes and said they would try to restore the cuts when they return from recess in mid-August.

The California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, which advocates for more than 200 agencies throughout the state, said it is looking into other funding options.

Duggan said four women have died this year from domestic violence in Ventura County, more than she has seen in her nine years as director of the Victims' Assistance Program.

"Women need a safe place to go where they can receive services to start to rebuild their lives," she said. "This is devastating."

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Comments

Posted by [Blonde_Dancer](#) on August 1, 2009 at 1:24 a.m. ([Suggest removal](#))

I hope that the community and ICFS can rally together to raise the private funds needed to open at least one of the units.
 Another resource is the VFC although it's located a few miles outside the area - in the valley. While it is managed

by the Sisters of Charity, women and children of all faiths who seek help from domestic violence, are welcome.

Posted by Ladydiodes2 on August 1, 2009 at 6:04 a.m. (Suggest removal)

Why should the taxpayers being paying for this anyway. If these facilities are truly for domestic violence women and children, than have the abuser pay for this service by sueing him in court or having a law in place to ensure that thea abuser is paying for these services, whether the abuser is a man or woman. Taxpayers should not have to pay for all of these services that were cut by the govener. It is time to take responsibility to where it belongs, back to the abuser in this case.

Posted by highriseray1 on August 1, 2009 at 6:08 a.m. (Suggest removal)

this very bad, my x-girlfriend use to work there and she told me some scarey stories about how an x spouses would stalk there victims and then find out where they would go shopping, find them beat them or take them to there safe house, please do not close this one and only center, women in need really do need this

Posted by ironwoman on August 1, 2009 at 8:07 a.m. (Suggest removal)

This disgusts me. People in serious need, not by their choice, have to suffer because of the budget. Why doesn't our Government get their priorities together? Why is it that convicted felons get cadillac healthcare, shelter, meals, clothing, etc....on the taxpayer? Yet, children and Mothers are the ones without safe homes...why is that?

Ladydiodes- Are you for real? I am a taxpayer and by all means, tax me extra to pay for these shelters. Sue the suspect, the perp.....please. These losers have nothing to sue for. And do you think that they will pay restitution for their crimes?

Posted by stonewall on August 1, 2009 at 8:19 a.m. (Suggest removal)

this is not good at all by all means lets fund the 211 program we hear you talking but we do not have any where for you to go so just sit down and cry....

Posted by jeff93024 on August 1, 2009 at 8:30 a.m. (Suggest removal)

Arnold isn't worried. In fact, he's going to kick back and have a stogie.

From an NY Times interview with Arnold:

"Schwarzenegger reclined deeply in his chair, lighted an eight-inch cigar and declared himself 'perfectly fine,' despite the fiscal debacle and personal heartsickness all around him. 'Someone else might walk out of here every day depressed, but I don't walk out of here depressed,' Schwarzenegger said. Whatever happens, 'I will sit down in my Jacuzzi tonight,' he said. 'I'm going to lay back with a stogie.'"

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/05/mag...>)

Posted by CandleintheWind on August 1, 2009 at 9:06 a.m. (Suggest removal)

Gee, no posts from the Usuals spewing about how it's all the Illegals' fault??

This is only the beginning effects of a Draconian budget forced by our Governor.

Posted by magilla on August 1, 2009 at 9:22 a.m. (Suggest removal)

ironwoman- good post.

This is a disgusting thing arnold has done. I am having a hard time coming up with any words allowed on this site that would accurately describe how I feel.
DISGUSTING!

Posted by whereyoufromdude on August 1, 2009 at 9:44 a.m. (Suggest removal)

I have no problem with such a closure, so long as they actually incur savings, i.e., lay off all of the people employed, and save their salaries and benefits - but do NOT let them waste the money on something else! As far as the battered people, perhaps they can go home and try to patch things up with their partners, and try to get along better.

Posted by DonS on August 1, 2009 at 10:24 a.m. (Suggest removal)

This particular agency seems clearly to be part of the fraud Arnold was talking about. There rhetoric is feminist rather than serving all victims.

More they say that 200,000 was chopped from their budget, but 30,000 would restore service. (Not sure I want a bigoted service restored.)

Implied but not as clear is that the agency is sitting on real estate assets and other funds. I suspect, perhaps unfairly, that they have dumped service and kept the capacity to make the same biased advocacy to state and local government.

Posted by ironwoman on August 1, 2009 at 10:28 a.m. (Suggest removal)

DonS- What's the feminism here? Women being beat by their spouses and needing a place to live for safety reasons...for their children as well?

Thanks Magalia- I personally know some people at this agency who are devoted to helping women and children of abuse. I am saddened that this is happening to them.

Posted by argcme on August 1, 2009 at 10:32 a.m. (Suggest removal)

WHY do I read the comments??

whereyoufromdude: Did you post your comment just to get the pot stirring?

Or are you really just an ignoramus...?

Posted by Ladydiodes2 on August 1, 2009 at 10:47 a.m. (Suggest removal)

I am still with the belief that taxpayers should not carry the burden for all of these social programs. Oviously the general public think that the working class should pay for everything. Not in my world do I want to pay for all of the social programs out there. Let the families start paying their fare share. Also if we were not paying for all the illegals in this country, than the state and local governments would not have to cut these type of programs anyway.

Posted by highriseray1 on August 1, 2009 at 10:55 a.m. (Suggest removal)

to where you from dude you must be gay and if you are not , you are a very sad soul!!!!

Posted by tbird on August 1, 2009 at 11:18 a.m. (Suggest removal)

I believe that churches and charities should be the providers of these social services not the taxpayers.

Tax money should only be used for things that benefit everyone - infrastructure, police, fire, etc.

Posted by OjaiGuy on August 1, 2009 at 11:34 a.m. (Suggest removal)

Ladydiodes2, DonS, WYFD, I think I can safely say you have never seen the results of domestic violence, spousal and/or child abuse.

I knew a lady, Marsha Lane, who was murdered by her boyfriend and left naked at Lincoln Elementary down there on Santa Clara in Ventura. She came to the Ojai Shelter on a Saturday night all beaten up, black eyes, swollen face, broken nose and bruises all over her body. She stayed that night and said she was going back to Ventura, and I pleaded with her to stay in Ojai as long as she needed, but she declined. She was found murdered less than a week later.

Sadly, Marsha was not the first or last victim of abuse that I have seen. As a man, I can't imagine why a woman would stay in an abusive relationship. I have read and been told why some do, but I still can't understand it. I can't feel as a woman does.

I do understand this. The need for shelters for victims of abuse is great. These shelter/safe houses locations also need to be confidential and secure for the safety of the victims and staff. This is not a commission meeting a couple of times a year. This is day in and day out occurrence where women are rightly in fear for their lives, as well as their children.

It is not unusual for the abuser to go looking for the victim(s). Going to a relatives house, if one is nearby, is not safe. The abuser knows where they are, too. Going to relatives house puts that family at risk. It is not uncommon to read about some whack job killing not just his wife and kids, but other relatives, too. Very recently there was the murder in Simi at the dental office that also involved an additional family member being shot, and anyone else around.

Kissing and making up? Most professionals will tell you that is a very common occurrence. The abuser makes promises and begs the victim to return. Then the abuse is repeated. The abuse is learned behavior and takes years of therapy to overcome, if ever.

Restraining orders? Worthless pieces of paper.

Folks, if you can, please donate to local shelters or programs you find worthy of your hard earned money, or volunteer as you find you are able. We aren't seeing the whole iceberg we are running into.

Posted by DonS on August 1, 2009 at 1:02 p.m. (Suggest removal)

OjaiGuy

Frankly, I see more male victims of domestic violence, but that is probably because they are the ones discriminated against by feminist services like Interface Children Family Services. Note that feminist District Attorney Catherine Duggan gives at least tacit approval to that discrimination in her statements.

Here are two sources which give the bigger picture. Both show women are only slightly more violent than men.

<http://pn.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/co...>

<http://www.csulb.edu/~mfiebert/assaul...>

Hope those underscore the need to solve the problem rather than divert funds to feminist special interest.

Posted by yneemee on August 1, 2009 at 1:33 p.m. (Suggest removal)

hey, highriseray - why the bigoted comment you made about whereyoufromdude that he (or she) must be "gay" - gay people are victims of domestic violence and gay bashing and your comment just feeds into that bigotry and hatred making "you" the potential abuser

most of the abusers are straight males and sometimes females and a comment that someone who may not support more funding for domestic violence is gay is an ignorant statement - most gay people strongly support these shelters because they now how important they are

the headline on this article was wrong as well - not all domestic violence shelters in county are closed -

sad to say but government alone cannot provide all the services needed in this country or state or county any longer - while I agree that priorities are often wrong about the government's decisions, the taxpayers cannot afford and are no longer willing to continue to pay more in taxes, no matter how important the need is...

too bad the people don't have the line item veto to decide what is truly important since it is our tax dollars being spent... rather than state assembly, state senate, governor and lobbyists.....

Posted by DonS on August 1, 2009 at 1:51 p.m. (Suggest removal)

Their 2007 tax form shows \$6.5 million in revenue and \$2 million in assets. \$200,000 isn't much of a hit. Me thinks the ladies protest too much.

http://tfcny.fdncenter.org/990_pdf_ar...

More frightening is that they have other services for children. If they use that same feminist attitude there are going to be a lot more children without both parents. Some will become foster kids and that is frightening!

Posted by OjaiGuy on August 1, 2009 at 1:55 p.m. (Suggest removal)

Abuse is certainly not exclusive to one sex. However, men can dish out a lot more punishment than women, and if you can't take a hit from a female without retaliating, you have issues. There is no excuse for beating a woman, no matter how much she "deserves" it.

Example. Last year at the Ojai Shelter, a homeless woman, known for being extremely volatile, went off on one of the volunteers, striking him. I was already on the phone with the 911 operator requesting police assistance because of her behavior leading up to that event. When she hit the volunteer when they were outside, that was it for me.

I went out and she threatened me that she had a knife. I used some training I've had and promptly had her face first on the sidewalk and in a hold that causes extreme pain with very little exertion on my part. I could have broken her neck, dislocated her shoulder, snapped her arm into four pieces, in any and all combinations. I only needed to use what I call the "wrist thingy." It can be intensely painful. As long as she didn't resist, I didn't apply pressure. When she did, I applied pressure and she felt extreme pain. She got the message.

I kept her down until the police showed up. They arrested her for assault. No punches thrown, except by her, and no damage done to her. Even the pain from the wrist thingy goes away immediately. I did not even need to combine the thumb and/or little finger pull trick that will drop you to your knees.

I was raised to avoid violence, be able to defend myself, and never, ever, hit a girl.

Posted by TO_cracker on August 1, 2009 at 1:55 p.m. (Suggest removal)

Little by little the social programs that made this state a civilized place to live are being eliminated. Maybe we can live without them or maybe public outcry will bring them back. Time will tell.

Posted by Phone_man on August 1, 2009 at 2:29 p.m. (Suggest removal)

cozy_in_bed, Shouldn't your statment read.
Little by little the social programs that made this state a welfare state are being eliminated.
Maybe we can live without them or maybe public outcry will bring them back. Time will tell.

Posted by Tom_Johnston on August 1, 2009 at 3:17 p.m. (Suggest removal)

This action by the Governor is just typical of what you can expect from Republican leadership. From Ronald Reagan to now, in California and in this nation if you aren't voting Republican, you can expect to be on the losing end of decisions like this.

It is fairly pointed out that while this service primarily serves women, that sometimes men are the victims of domestic violence. While I suspect those instances are few compared to violence on women, there needs to be recognition that it happens. Either way, children are in the crossfire of domestic violence, that does not change.

Comments like "perhaps they can go home and try to patch things up with their partners, and try to get along better." are contemptible and show true ignorance of the realities of domestic violence.

Posted by horsespinner on August 1, 2009 at 3:27 p.m. (Suggest removal)

Compassionate civilized people when spending my money. ok, well time to step up to the plate. You're compassionately overdrawn and the bills are due, donate funds keep these shelters open, but not my cash please.

Posted by marisol on August 1, 2009 at 3:59 p.m. (Suggest removal)

Abuse does not belong exclusively to a man or woman. It is about someone trying to control the other with violence, emotion, money, isolation and sexual abuse. I have unfortunately know many women and some men that have been abused by using power and control. Domestic Violence is abuse that occurs between intimate partners, a husband and wife, girlfriend and boyfriend, same sex partners everything else is either family violence, assault or child abuse.

Batterers do pay some compensation to shelters but this is not enough to support all these shelter whether they're here in Ventura County or elsewhere. These shelters are not feminist organizations and they do provide emergency shelter to men. they also teach children safety and parents non-violence. It's sad to read comments about something so important where writers are trying to cloud or confuse the issue.

Posted by SpeedyGonzales on August 1, 2009 at 4:56 p.m. (Suggest removal)

It is not a good thing these shelters are closing but my opinion is they should be funded from private donations anyway. The government should not be paying for them. If the government were to quit funding social programs, and reduce taxes appropriately then those that want to support a program could do so. There would be a lot less fraud and the overall cost for programs would be reduced. We could have better programs at a lower cost... but of course there would be many state employees without a job, which would be a good thing. As long as the government provides taxpayer money for a program there will be considerable waste and fraud.

Posted by roboford2008 on August 1, 2009 at 6:12 p.m. (Suggest removal)

OjaiGuy I think I have a way. Need to work on it and its not easy. THIS STORY PISSES ME OFF. Give me a couple of days. These folks need help and I will find a way. Star keep this story open PLEASE. I just emailed a friend to see what we can do.

Posted by roboford2008 on August 1, 2009 at 6:25 p.m. (Suggest removal)

Hanyhood & BD we can work together on this one and make it happen. Are you guys game, I know I am??? I have enough ties in the government, no promise but good connections. LETS DO IT BREAKFAST CLUB!!!

Posted by LibertyLips on August 2, 2009 at 7:53 a.m. (Suggest removal)

What is wrong with us? The fact that we even need shelters to protect victims while their abusers are free to stalk and harass them is pathetic. HELLO?! If a judge feels that someone is a threat and proceeds to sign off on a restraining order, and a scared and desperate family seeks refuge in a shelter, why aren't these abusers in jail?????

Oh that's right, our jails and prisons are stuffed with NON-VIOLENT drug users instead of violent people! So the best we can do to for victims of domestic violence is issue restraining orders to those who violently abuse and threaten their family?? WTF!

Posted by PCLEMSC on August 2, 2009 at 10:45 a.m. (Suggest removal)

Since these shelters/programs refuse to provide services for battered men, they deserve to lose all government funding. No agency which discriminates so blatantly should be funded, EVER! With these agencies shut down, there will be fewer professional feminazis to generate false accusations against men. That means fewer families broken up, and fewer children made fatherless. Perhaps then, the politicians and media will realize that most accusations against men are false to begin with.

Posted by oxnardresident8 on August 2, 2009 at 11:38 a.m. (Suggest removal)

whereyoufromdude, DonS, and Ladydiodes2:

You three are incredibly ignorant and insensitive. The problem with people like you in this world is that you don't have the FIRST clue about domestic violence. Spend a week in the hospital like I did, I was beaten and bruised and cut up. Programs like Interface are a GOD SEND. I thank God every day of my life for Interface, they helped me through the darkest time of my life.

DonS - Interface is NOT a feminist program or whatever you were blabbing about. The fact of the matter is that REPORTED domestic violence is mainly against women. These piece of sh_t "men" stalk their wife/girlfriend, use our children against us, make our life a living hell. We NEED somewhere to go - with our kids - that is safe.

Schwarzzenegger, I would love to see you thrown in a situation that I have been in, along with millions of other women - maybe you'd think twice about closing the ONLY safe places we have to go. You sir, are an absolute ignorant IDIOT.

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