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June 15, 2017

The Honorable Nancy Skinner  
Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety  
1020 N. Street, Room 2031  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support AB 1033 (Garcia) – Stealthing

Dear Chairwoman Skinner,

On behalf of the California Women's Law Center (CWLC), we write in support of Assembly Bill 1033, which would make the nonconsensual intentional removal or tampering with a condom during sexual intercourse a form of rape.

Although California defines rape as penetration without consent, it does not acknowledge the current practice of "stealthing" – the nonconsensual removal or tampering with a condom during sexual intercourse. Clearly, when a condom is used the expectation is that it will not be removed without explicit consent, and removal of a condom without such consent should be considered rape.

But unfortunately, this practice is gaining popularity with internet websites and online communities who defend stealthing as a male "right". Online blogs and forums "train" other men about stealthing best practices, and offer support and advice in their pursuit of nonconsensual condom removal during sex. Deeply rooted in centuries of rape culture based on dominance and control, particularly of women by men, stealthing is gaining attention in the media by both straight and gay men.

Stealthing is also an issue of public health. According to the recent STD Surveillance Report from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, the total combined cases of gonorrhea, chlamydia, and syphilis reported in the United States in 2015 reached record highs. In the United States alone, there are nearly 20 million cases of new sexually transmitted infections yearly, half among young people aged 15–24, and account for almost \$16 billion in health care costs. Each of these infections is a potential threat to an individual's immediate and long-term health and well-being. This is especially true for women who are not only more susceptible to STDs but they also disproportionately bear the long-term consequences of these infections.

CWLC's mission is to advance the potential of women and girls through transformative litigation, policy advocacy, and education. CWLC recognizes the devastating impact that rape and nonconsensual sexual contact have on women's health and safety. For these reasons, the California Women's Law Center strongly supports AB 1033.

Sincerely,

Betsy Butler  
Executive Director