



*News From*  
**The California Women's Law Center**

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**CWLC and State Senator Levine  
Introduce Legislation to Address Teen Dating Violence**

The California Women's Law Center, together with California Assemblymember Lloyd Levine (D- San Fernando Valley), introduced legislation today to address the epidemic of violence among teenagers involved in dating relationships, or "teen dating violence." AB 589 is being co-sponsored by Break the Cycle and Peace Over Violence, two survivor services organizations, and will amend the state education code to require schools to respond to, and work to prevent, teen dating violence.

"The long term impact of teen dating violence is profound and the residual effects can last long after the actual incident," said Katie Buckland, Executive Director of the California Women's Law Center. "The seeds of victimization and violence that later manifests as domestic violence may be rooted in escalating patterns established in adolescence with teen dating violence. This is an urgent public health and safety issue that requires immediate legislative action."

"Teen dating violence is an ignored epidemic in California," Assemblymember Levine said. "With 20 percent to 33 percent of teenagers experiencing abuse in an adolescent relationship, teen dating violence is a pervasive problem in its own right, but it is also a precursor to adult domestic violence. As leaders, we are doing society a disservice by not addressing teen dating violence head on. The legislature must do more to end the cycle of abuse before it starts and prevent a lifetime of domestic violence, which is why I have authored AB 589."

Teen dating violence is a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an individual against a current or former dating partner who is an adolescent. Nearly thirty-percent of teens will experience abuse in a dating relationship, yet schools do not have protocols in place to respond to teen dating violence against students. One and a half million high school students report some form of physical violence from their romantic partner. A recent Centers for Disease Control study found that one out of every eleven high school students reported being hit, slapped or physically hurt by their boyfriend or girlfriend. Nearly one in ten also said they had been coerced into having sexual intercourse against their will.

AB 589 would expand California Education Code § 32282 to mandate that high schools respond to incidents of sexual assault, rape, physical and verbal assault and intimidation between students on campus. Specifically, campus police and security would be required to respond to violations of protective or restraining orders occurring on school grounds. The legislation creates a statewide task force on teen dating violence to develop a model protocol for school response and training materials for teachers and administrators. The bill also requires that schools maintain victims' confidentiality when investigating or responding to a complaint of teen dating and/or sexual violence. To prevent teen dating violence and improve student awareness, the bill directs that the next revision of the student health curriculum will include a unit on teen dating violence.

“Teen dating violence is a school safety issue. Like gang activity and bullying, this violence makes schools less safe,” said Emily Austin, staff attorney for the California Women’s Law Center. “Victims and batterers are more likely than their peers to bring weapons onto campus, and physical abuse occurs on school grounds in nearly half of abusive teen relationships.”

#### **About the California Women’s Law Center**

**Since its founding in 1989, the California Women's Law Center has worked in collaboration with others to protect, secure and advance the comprehensive civil rights of women and girls. CWLC has unparalleled expertise in strategies to protect and advance women's rights with programs to empower individuals to use the law to address the societal and legal issues that perpetuate ongoing gender inequity, women’s health issues, reproductive justice and violence against women.**

Learn more about A.B. ###, and the California Women’s Law Center at [www.cwlc.org](http://www.cwlc.org)