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April 30, 2018

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2354 (Rubio) – Support

Dear Assemblymember Gonzalez Fletcher,

On behalf of the California Women's Law Center (CWLC), we write in support of AB 2354, which will require court reporters be provided in child custody and domestic violence proceedings without charge to the parties.

In response to the recession and budget crisis, many state courts eliminated court reporters in family law proceedings. Thus, parties who wish to have an official record of the proceedings must hire and pay the substantial cost of providing their own private court reporter. Family law litigants are overwhelmingly unrepresented at the trial level, particularly in domestic violence cases. Even if these litigants are aware that they could provide a court reporter for their case, many are unlikely to be able to afford one.

Access to a verbatim transcript is critically important, as it enables litigants to craft accurate post-hearing orders that law enforcement may be called upon to enforce. A record is equally important when a case is appealed because in many cases it will be denied without a reporter's transcript. AB 2354 addresses the devastating effect that the absence of a verbatim record may have in custody and family violence cases impacting the most vulnerable litigants who frequently are experiencing some of the most traumatic moments in their life.

CWLC's mission is to advance the potential of women and girls through transformative litigation, policy advocacy and education. For nearly three decades, CWLC has placed an emphasis on eradicating all forms of discrimination and violence against women. Part of CWLC's mission is to ensure that women and children have access to resources to protect against and overcome violence.

For all these reasons, the California Women's Law Center supports AB 2354.

Sincerely,



Betsy Butler