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Betsy Butler

March 14, 2017

Honorable Blanca Rubio  
Chair, Assembly Human Services Committee  
State Capitol, Room 5175  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support AB 557 (Rubio) – CalWORKs Domestic Violence

Dear Chairperson Rubio:

On behalf of the California Women's Law Center, we write in support of Assembly Bill 557 because it would strengthen aid to domestic violence victims who are applicants or recipients of CalWORKs assistance.

In 2014, over 20,000 survivors and their children received emergency shelter at domestic violence programs in California. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services reported that these programs provided a total of 602,579 safe bed nights for families that would otherwise have been forced to leave their home with no safe place to go to.

Research shows that when there are effective domestic violence waiver options in a Temporary Aid to Needy Families program, such as CalWORKs, a significant difference is made in the lives of victims and their children.

AB 557 will improve options for low-income parents seeking to escape abuse by ensuring that domestic violence waivers are more readily available to families that need them. By replacing the current "offer" of a waiver to domestic violence victims with a requirement, AB 557 will facilitate a higher level of protection for victims and their families. It will also expand the availability of waiver to any situation which disadvantages victims of domestic abuse or further endangers them, rather than only offering waiver if the abuse interrupts the victim's ability to participate in welfare to work.

By ensuring that the basic needs of low-income families are met, we can increase the chances of survivors staying safe. Because it offers much needed support to domestic violence victims and their families, the California Women's Law Center strongly supports AB 557.

Sincerely,



Betsy Butler  
Executive Director

CC: Krista Niemczyk, California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (Co-Sponsor)  
Jessica Bartholow, Western Center on Law and Poverty (Co-Sponsor)  
Kevin Aslanian, Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations (Co-Sponsor)