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Betsy Butler

September 1, 2016

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 813 (Leyva) – Urge Signature

Dear Governor Brown:

The California Women's Law Center (CWLC) is a proud co-sponsor of Senate Bill 813 (Leyva), the Justice for Victims Act. This bill would eliminate the statute of limitations for rape and related felony sex crimes in California and in so doing, emphasize the severity of sexual violence and ensure survivors have access to justice. CWLC joins district attorneys, civil rights attorneys and women and children's rights advocates in support of SB 813.

Currently, the statute of limitations for the prosecution of a felony sex offense is just 10 years, while the prosecution of sexual offenses against a minor must be commenced prior to the victim's 40th birthday. These statutes of limitations, which allow perpetrators to escape justice because of the passage of an arbitrary measure of time, are grossly unfair to survivors of sexual crimes. Our laws should protect the rights of victims who have the courage to come forward *whenever* they feel safe doing so. Instead, the current laws silence victims and protect their assailants.

CWLC is the first law center in California dedicated solely to addressing the unique needs of women and girls. Since its founding in 1989, CWLC has worked to break down barriers and advance the potential of women and girls through transformative litigation, policy advocacy and education. CWLC actively supports survivors of sexual violence and works to advance policies to stop these crimes.

By signing SB 813, you will send a powerful message to victims of sexual violence that California takes these heinous crimes seriously and that the law is on their side. The passage of SB 813 will empower victims as they make the important decision to report the crimes committed against them. SB 813 will also diminish one of a sexual predator's most powerful weapons: the silence of the men and women who survive their attacks.

As an advocate for justice and on behalf of rape and sexual assault victims in California, the California Women's Law Center asks for your support of SB 813.

Sincerely,



Betsy Butler
Executive Director

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