



June 5, 2018

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The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Public Safety Committee
State Capitol, Room 2059
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 372 (Stone, M) – Batterer Intervention Programs
As Amended June 19, 2017 – Co-Sponsor
Set to be heard June 12, 2018 – Senate Public Safety Committee**

Dear Senator Skinner:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) writes as a co-sponsor and in support of Assembly Bill 372, by Assembly Member Mark Stone. This measure, as amended, would create a pilot program that would allow the counties of Napa, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and Yolo to offer an alternative to the batterer intervention program.

In the early 1990s California established a mandatory 52 week domestic violence batterer intervention program for persons placed on probation for domestic violence battery. Under state law, probation chiefs are responsible for assessing offender needs and certifying and monitoring domestic violence batterer treatment programs. For the most part, the controlling statutes for batterer intervention programs have not been updated since 1994.

In 2012, the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) released a report that found domestic violence offenders generally have a high rate of recidivism. Further, studies using direct victim interviews over a period of time estimate repeat violence in the range of 40 to 80 percent of cases. The report also looked at the effectiveness of batterer intervention programs and stated, "...domestic violence is a complicated community problem and we have yet to figure out what works for effectively intervening with batterers to reduce recidivism. Research to date has indicated that the most common court-mandated batterer intervention programs do not reduce recidivism or alter batterers' attitudes about violence." (Webster, M. and K. Bechtel (2012). *Evidence-Based Practices for Assessing, Supervising and Treating Domestic Violence Offenders*. Crime and Justice Institute at Community Resources for Justice: Boston, MA.)

AB 372 would allow the pilot counties to take an alternative and innovative approach to the current, statutorily required 52 week program, if:

- The county develops the program in consultation with the domestic violence service providers and other relevant community partners;
- The county performs a risk and needs assessment utilizing an assessment demonstrated to be appropriate for domestic violence offenders for each offender entering the program;
- The offender's treatment within the program is based on the findings of the risk and needs assessment;
- The program includes components which are evidence-based or promising practices;
- The program has a comprehensive written curriculum that informs the operations of the program and outlines the treatment and intervention modalities;
- The program is not less than one year in length, unless an alternative length is established by a validated risk and needs assessment completed by the probation department or an organization approved by the probation department; and,
- The county collects specified data and provides an annual report to the legislature.

AB 372 is the first step in assessing whether there are treatment programs that do not necessarily comply with current statutory requirements, that more effectively address the criminogenic needs of batterers and result in reducing recidivism.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports AB 372 and respectfully requests your **AYE** vote. If you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to me at jdevencenzi@counties.org or 916.650.8131.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Devencenzi', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Jessica Devencenzi
Legislative Representative

cc: The Honorable Mark Stone, California State Assembly
Members and Consultant, Senate Public Safety Committee
Eric Csizmar, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus