



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 31, 2023

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100+ California organizations warn of consequences without continued funding to prevent sexual and domestic violence

The California Legislature still has the opportunity to include effective strategies in the budget

SACRAMENTO — A coalition of over 100 organizations including the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color (ABMOC), the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (the Partnership), the Culturally Responsive Domestic Violence Network (CRDVN), and ValorUS® (VALOR) along with Assembly Member Jones-Sawyer have been advocating for \$44 million to prevent and end cycles of domestic and sexual violence.

The stakes are high if this funding is not included in the budget. Not only will future programs be hindered from being implemented, but also current programs that have been granted one-time funding in FY 21-22 will be left without a way to continue the progress that they have made in their communities.

Currently, California is not making the investments needed to be a national leader in ending sexual and domestic violence and is failing to follow best practices outlined by national leaders. Notably, on the same day that the White House debuted the [National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence: Strategies for Action](#), the Assembly released their final budget actions which failed to include any funding for prevention. Governor Newsom's May Revise released earlier this month also failed to include prevention funding. Neither his budget, nor the final budget actions released by the California Assembly included any dedicated funding for these solutions. While the California Senate's proposal included \$2.875 million one-time funding to extend the Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention Grant to October 2024, the lack of unified state action is in direct contrast with the National Plan's commitment to enhancing and promoting gender based violence prevention strategies and supporting innovative solutions for survivors from marginalized, underserved and vulnerable populations.

Prevention works by changing the conditions and norms that create space and opportunity for domestic and sexual violence to occur. "We teach signs of healthy relationships so that the youth can examine their relationships they're currently in and possibly want in the future," said Floyd Jeffries, Violence Prevention Educator at Peace Over Violence. "Having these types of programs give youth a safe, inclusive, and healthy place for them to ask questions. In doing this work, this also helps interrupt the school to prison pipeline.

But us youth leaders and adult preventionist cannot do it by ourselves. This work needs funding to achieve and reach so many who are in dire need of the prevention work. I call on the legislators and government to help us and provide prevention funding, to help this work reach everyone.”

More than 100 gender justice organizations are requesting \$20 million for domestic and sexual violence prevention grants, \$22 million to support innovative interventions and culturally rooted approaches to end domestic and sexual violence, and \$2 million to establish a senior advisor on violence prevention.

Michelle Cates, Executive Director of Partners Against Violence — a recipient of 2021 funding — stated, “The one-time prevention funding has allowed Partners Against Violence to support teens to create Youth-led Partnerships by engaging and empowering youth in military families through our Future Now Program. Youth-leaders in this program bring solution focused ideas that confront violence in their communities. If this funding is not renewed we will lose critical programs currently reaching more than 8,000 teens by dismantling the solid foundation carefully constructed by approximately 350 Youth Leaders serving Yermo, the surrounding communities and the Ft. Irwin Military Base. This loss would be detrimental as Future Now has the potential to expand and support an infinite number of youth in effecting positive culture change in their communities for generations. An investment in providing our youth the opportunity and tools to create a California free from violence is a critical investment!”

“We need Governor Newsom and the California Legislature to invest in prevention funding today. We need to address the root causes of sexual and domestic violence; we have to get in front of the issues, but we cannot do that without sustainable funding. Prevention is the long-game, it helps us create a shift, a change in our culture. By leading with prevention, we are implementing social change, dismantling violence and normalizing healthy relationships,” said Sandra Henriquez, CEO of VALOR.

Kimmie Remis, a Prevention Specialist for the Partnership who provides training and technical assistance to the programs that have received this one-time funding, reflected on the dire implications if the state legislature were to discontinue this funding once again: “We have thousands of youth and their communities that are receiving much needed support and education around healthy relationships, breaking cycles of violence, and reaching underserved populations. This incredible work is thanks to state funding that the legislature has supported in the past. The ripple effect from not having continuous prevention funding for the state would be devastating. We can avoid that and continue the positive work being done, by making this commitment to the people of California.”

Assembly Member Jones-Sawyer, who is championing this budget effort, reflects, “Domestic and sexual violence is not just pervasive in our court systems, it is a destructive community issue that harms families, children, and the adults involved. Its effect on an individual’s ability to

work, cope mentally, and handle daily life functions can ravage that person's outlook on life causing despair and additional pain and suffering.

This modest budget request for prevention programs and education, when funded, will help end this critical societal issue that harms people of all genders. The time to help Californians suffering from domestic and sexual violence is now.”

California needs to continue to set a national precedent that they will not tolerate domestic and sexual violence. Prevention funding is the solution to ending domestic and sexual violence and now is the time to invest \$20 million.