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Governor and California Legislature Fail to Fund Vital Prevention Programs

SACRAMENTO – A coalition of more than 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 budget champion Assembly Member Reggie Jones-Sawyer, are deeply disappointed in the Governor and California Legislature’s failure to prioritize and fund programs that prevent and end sexual and domestic violence.

In 2021, California granted \$15 million in one-time funding to support communities in preventing sexual and domestic violence. That funding is set to expire April 2024. Without prospect of renewed funding, 46 anti-violence programs in California relying on this state support are being forced to make decisions to shut down their prevention programs resulting in layoffs or scramble at this 11th hour and find alternative funding to support their ongoing work.

“This is an absolute horror story. They want us to work to end sexual violence, to educate our communities, and do everything we can with minimal funds...and we see prevention working,” shared Christine Castillo, Executive Director at Verity.

Prevention works by changing the conditions and norms that create space and opportunity for domestic and sexual violence to occur. An evaluation by the [California Department of Public Health](#) and the [Center on Gender Equity and Health at UC San Diego School of Medicine](#) highlights the effectiveness of one such prevention effort: [California’s Rape Prevention and Education Program](#). This program, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, brings funding and resources to states to support prevention programming. Over 40 percent of organizations that implemented this program reported that it resulted in a school or community policy or protocol change that helped reduce sexual violence in their community. The same evaluation found that over 80 percent of participating agencies reported community leadership, action, or interest in preventing sexual violence following implementation of the program.

“Violence in all of its forms *is* preventable – observing any lesson taught by organizations like Peace Over Violence will show you how it only takes minutes for someone’s mindset to completely change. But we can’t work towards ensuring that every Californian lives in safe and healthy relationships, schools, and communities unless the programs crucial to eradicating

violence are fully, continuously funded. Life free from violence is a human right, and it's immensely disappointing that these recent funding choices refuse to reflect that," voiced Peace Over Violence Youth Advocate, Maya.

This budget request is an insignificant amount when compared to California's overall budget, but failing to include the funding will result in significant and long-lasting impacts on Californians. Prevention work addresses the root causes that allow violence to persist in our communities. We strongly urge Governor Newsom to lead California at the earliest opportunity and set a national precedent that prevention belongs in the fabric of state policy.