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Legislature's Budget Provides Needed Prevention and Victim Services Funding

Advocates Praise the Budget Committee's Actions, Call for Additional Focus on Long Term Funding Stability & Ongoing Investment in Prevention

SACRAMENTO — Valor US (formerly the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault) and the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence applaud the State Assembly and Senate Budget Committees for approving \$15 million for sexual and domestic violence prevention efforts and \$100 million in funding for crime victim services in the 2021 Budget adopted by budget committees today.

As many Californians seek services after being confined to abusive households during this pandemic, the need to prevent violence and support survivors has never been more urgent. In spite of the state's prior underinvestment and lack of consistent violence prevention funding, local communities have implemented innovative strategies to prevent violence before it happens. We are grateful that the legislature listened to the voices of communities requesting a stronger investment in prevention to strengthen protective factors, while addressing root causes of violence. \$15 million in prevention funding is a historic amount from the State of California, and will allow sexual and domestic violence organizations to build more inclusive communities where healthy relationships, bystander engagement, and consent are the norm. We know ongoing funding will be needed - changing our societal conditions and norms to prevent this violence will require time and ongoing investment.

This comes at a crucial time: rates of violence rose during the pandemic and we must redouble our efforts around prevention as youth return to school with increased Adverse Childhood Experiences. We commend the legislature for recognizing that to truly end domestic and sexual violence in California, we must invest in prevention--but the work is not done with this one-time allocation. [The costs of sexual and domestic violence are astronomical](#): the lifetime economic burden of domestic violence in California is nearly \$400 billion and sexual violence costs the state of California \$140 billion annually. By preventing sexual assault or preventing an abusive relationship, the state can save billions in healthcare and law enforcement costs, reduce the cost of lost productivity, and improve mental health. As the Little Hoover Commission stated in its [January 2021 report](#) on the state of intimate partner violence, "the state must create a permanent funding stream in order to invest in prevention and early intervention."

The inclusion of \$100 million, which was also a part of Governor Newsom's May Budget Revision, provides a needed backfill to address the urgent crisis of [cuts to federal Victims of Crime Act \(VOCA\) funding](#). Without this infusion of funding, crime victim services would face significant cuts beginning in FY 22-23, an untenable possibility at a time when demand for victim services is rising. The funding included will support the many organizations providing essential, life-saving services to victims of violent crime—including rape crisis services, domestic violence programs supporting survivors experiencing and at risk of homelessness, racially and culturally responsive healing, legal services for survivors who would otherwise navigate our court system unrepresented, child abuse programs, and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs). We also appreciate the budget committee's recognition that additional federal funding gaps may emerge in future budget years. We look forward to working through future budget cycles to protect these programs from any cuts.

We look forward to working with the Governor and the Legislature to ensure that essential funding for prevention and crime survivor services are both included in the final budget and sustained in the years to come.

About ValorUS:

ValorUS is a national organization committed to advancing equity and ending sexual violence. Since our founding in 1980, we have continued to build dynamic relationships across a diverse range of communities, institutions and systems, and mobilize our network of survivors and advocates to influence change. Through leadership, prevention, and advocacy, we are fearlessly pursuing a world free from violence where the dignity of every person is valued and respected. For more information, visit valor.us.

About the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence:

The California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (the Partnership) is California's recognized domestic violence coalition, representing over 1,000 survivors, advocates, organizations and allied individuals across the state. Working at the local, state and national levels for nearly 40 years, the Partnership has a long track record of successfully passing over 200 pieces of legislation on behalf of domestic violence victims and their children. The Partnership believes that by sharing expertise, advocates and legislators can end domestic violence. Through our public policy, communications and capacity building programs, we create system-wide change that supports survivors and invests in prevention. Every day we inspire, inform and connect all those concerned with this issue, because together we're stronger. With offices in Sacramento, the Partnership's member programs span the entire state. For more information, visit www.cpedv.org.

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