



YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Use Your Voice

March 23rd, 2023

The Honorable Reginald Byrob Jones-Sawyer Sr.
Chair, Assembly Public Safety Committee
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: AB 1028 (McKinnor) – Centering Survivor Safety and Health - SUPPORT

DEAR CHAIRPERSON JONES-SAWYER,

On behalf of Youth Leadership Institute, I write today in support of Assembly Bill 1028 (McKinnor). This important legislation will modernize California's medical mandated reporting law for adult violent injuries to better ensure safety and healthcare access for survivors of domestic, sexual, and interpersonal violence.

yli partners with thousands of youth across the state, the majority of whom are low-income youth of color. Many of these young people have had profoundly traumatizing experiences with law enforcement, who, at best, do nothing to improve their situations. As mandated reporters for our youth, we have long been in search of an alternative that can offer real support to survivors.

Because domestic and sexual violence often remove one's ability to exercise control over their life, advocates help survivors achieve safety and healing by supporting their self-determination and empowerment. Not only does medical mandated reporting replicate harmful coercive patterns over survivors' lives, it puts them in greater danger: according to a study of callers to National Domestic Violence Hotline, **51% of survivors who had experienced mandatory reporting stated that it made their situations *much worse***, and another 32% stated that it either made things worse or did not help them at all.

Domestic and sexual violence have been shown to be associated with increased risk of many health issues. Unfortunately, we have seen the ways in which medical mandated reporting requirements have kept survivors from seeking necessary healthcare in the first place, made survivors feel like they could never return to healthcare after they learned of the requirement, or made them feel like they could not share the reason for or extent of certain injuries or health issues with their provider. Not only do these requirements create a barrier to healthcare, but medical mandated reporting to law enforcement can result in the escalation of abuse, undue child welfare involvement, survivors themselves being criminalized, exposure to immigration detention or deportation, and more.

Although a well-intentioned attempt to ensure domestic and sexual violence is taken seriously as a health issue, there is no research that suggests that medical mandated reporting requirements result in positive safety outcomes for survivors. Survivors in California deserve to be able to access trauma-informed healthcare separately from law enforcement. Domestic and sexual violence advocates are specifically trained to help survivors more safely access the criminal and civil legal systems should they want to.

Because AB1028 will require health providers to offer a warm hand off and referral to an advocacy organization, advocates will be able to respond before violence escalates. A warm and informed connection to confidential advocacy services will allow survivors to address their many different safety needs - from crisis intervention, emergency housing to legal support - in an on-going and trauma-informed way.

Youth Leadership Institute is committed to ensuring that survivors of domestic, sexual, and interpersonal violence have robust access to healthcare and supportive services. For these reasons we are pleased to support AB 1028 (McKinnor) and respectfully urge your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

PATRICIA BARAHONA

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Youth Leadership Institute

CC: Office of Assembly Member McKinnor, Author
Members of the California State Assembly Public Safety Committee