



YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Use Your Voice

March 21st, 2024

The Honorable Kevin McCarty, Chairperson
Capitol Office, 1021 O Street, Suite 5610
Sacramento, California 95814

**Re: AB 3127 (McKinnor) - Centering Survivor Safety and Health -
SUPPORT**

Dear Chairperson McCarty,

On behalf of Youth Leadership Institute, I write today in support of Assembly Bill 3127 (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. AB 3127 will limit mandated reporting requirements to firearm and life-threatening injuries only, and also require health providers to offer patients experiencing all forms of domestic and sexual violence a connection to an advocacy organization.

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 often, at best, do nothing to improve their situations. As mandated reporters for our youth, we have long been in search of alternatives that can offer real support to survivors.

Domestic and sexual violence have been shown to be associated with increased risk of many health issues, and so health care providers play a critical role in prevention, identification, and response to violence. When providers are able to have open, trauma-informed conversations with patients about abuse, **survivors are four times more likely to access an intervention, such as domestic violence advocacy.** Unfortunately, we have

seen the ways in which strict medical mandated reporting requirements for all violent injuries 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 broad 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. 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.

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 for violent injuries 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 AB 3127 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.

In a more measured approach than previous versions of this bill, AB 3127 will limit injuries that require a medical mandated report to life threatening violent injuries and firearm injuries, as well as require that providers in acute care settings offer assistance to violently injured patients in accessing a medical evidentiary exam or reporting to law enforcement, in addition to making offering a connection to anti-violence advocates.

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 3127 (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