



March 17, 2016

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To: Members of the CSAC Administration of Justice (AOJ) Policy Committee

**From: Darby Kernan, AOJ Legislative Representative
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Re: Establish a Task Force on Domestic Violence Batterer Intervention Programs

Background: In the early 1990s California established a mandatory 52 week domestic violence batterer intervention program for persons placed on probation for domestic violence battery. Under state law, probation chiefs are responsible for assessing offender needs and certifying and monitoring domestic violence batterer treatment programs. For the most part, the controlling statutes for batterer intervention programs have not been updated since 1994.

In 2012 the Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) commissioned the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) to prepare a report regarding domestic violence diversion programs. The report found domestic violence offenders generally have a high rate of recidivism. Further, studies using direct victim interviews over a period of time estimate repeat violence in the range of 40 to 80 percent of cases.

The report also looked at the effectiveness of batterer intervention programs and stated, "...domestic violence is a complicated community problem and we have yet to figure out what works for effectively intervening with batterers to reduce recidivism. Research to date has indicated that the most common court-mandated batterer intervention programs do not reduce recidivism or alter batterers' attitudes about violence."

Existing CSAC Platform Policy: CSAC remains committed to raising awareness of the toll of family violence on families and communities by supporting efforts that target family violence prevention, intervention and treatment. Specific strategies for early intervention and success should be developed through cooperation between state and local governments, as well as community, and private organizations addressing family violence issues.

Recommended Action: The CSAC AOJ Committee create a multi-disciplinary task force with participation from various stakeholders including, but not limited to Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC), California District Attorneys Association (CDAA), the California State Sheriffs Association (CSSA), California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, victim advocates, Judicial Council, and a batterer intervention program provider.

The Goal: The task force would meet over the next several months to review California's batterer intervention programs; look at what other states provide for batterer intervention programs; review any research that looks at evidence-based batterer intervention programs; and go through California's domestic violence batterer intervention statutes to see what changes are needed.

The task force will complete a report making recommendations of how to improve and reform California's statutes overseeing domestic violence intervention programs. The report will be presented to the AOJ Committee upon its completion for recommended policy and potential legislative changes.

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