



PREVENTING VIOLENCE  
AND DEVELOPING  
YOUTH LEADERS

March 30, 2020

Honorable Shirley Weber  
State Capitol, Room 3123  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblymember Weber,

On behalf of Youth ALIVE!, we are pleased to support AB 2992 (Weber), which will support employment stability for survivors of violent crime and employees who lose loved ones.

Youth ALIVE! is a nationally recognized community-based organization known for initiating an alliance to treat violence as a public health crisis and developing young leaders in the process. Tasked as Oakland's anchor organization for violence prevention, intervention, and healing, Youth ALIVE! has maintained a successful track record of implementing evidence-based violence intervention and prevention services. One of these services is our Khadafy Washington Project, which provides critical support to the families of homicide victims and helps connect them to vital resources in order to promote healing in the immediate aftermath of a killing. Our team assists families with funeral planning, connects them with grief counseling and mental health services, and helps them navigate through the process of applying for assistance through the California Victim Compensation Program. However, even with robust support, our programs cannot completely shield victims from the potential consequences of taking leave from employment to cope and grieve.

A 2013 survey of California crime survivors found that 1 in 4 missed work following the crime. 2 in 3 reported experiencing anxiety, stress, and difficulty with sleeping, relationships, or work. Half of victims said it takes more than six months to recover following victimization.<sup>1</sup> Studies have shown that survivors of violent crimes, particularly low-income survivors, overwhelmingly need support meeting basic needs following the crime, including securing safe housing and stable employment.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Californians for Safety and Justice (2013). California Crime Victims' Voices: Findings from the First Ever Survey of California Crime Victims and Survivors.

<sup>2</sup> See Kelly, VG. et. al. (2010). Outreach, Engagement, and Practical Assistance: Essential Aspects of PTSD Care for Urban Victims of Violent Crime. *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, 11(3): 144-156.; See also Zatzick, D. et. al. (2007). Strengthening the patient-provider relationship in the aftermath of physical trauma through an understanding of the nature and severity of posttraumatic concerns. *Psychiatry*, 79, 260-273.

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Financial insecurity and other life stressors following a crime are among the factors that can increase a victim's risk of developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).<sup>3</sup>

A majority of survivors and their loved ones have limited legal protection if they need to take leave from work to make plans for safety, seek victim services, grieve the death of a loved one, relocate, secure childcare, or care for a loved one who was injured. Missed work, while coping with trauma and grief, can further destabilize the lives of survivors, who then risk losing their jobs.

California has already passed laudable legislation to support employment stability for specific groups of victims, but the state has the opportunity to do more to protect all victims of violent crime and help ensure employment stability so that victims can focus on recovery and safety. Although California and federal law protect employees to take leave to care for a child, spouse, or parent, or to welcome a new child, employees currently have no protection upon the death of an immediate family member from homicide, including a child. Government employees are promised only 3-days bereavement leave for the loss of a family member, and non-Governmental employees have no guarantee they can take even a day off to plan a funeral of a deceased loved one or to grieve an unthinkable loss.

AB 2992 would expand existing protections to all victims of violence and their family members, so that survivors have the time they need to get to safety, access services, heal, or grieve a devastating loss, without also worrying about losing their jobs. The bill would also reduce the paperwork burden on survivors by expanding the list of allowable forms of documentation to verify eligibility for leave. For the reasons above, Youth ALIVE! is proud to support AB 2992.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anne Marks", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Anne Marks  
Executive Director

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<sup>3</sup> Kelly, VG. et. al. (2010). Outreach, Engagement, and Practical Assistance: Essential Aspects of PTSD Care for Urban Victims of Violent Crime. *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, 11(3): 144-156.