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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anthony Portantino, Chair  
2021 - 2022 Regular Session

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### AB 2277 (Reyes) - CalWORKs: victims of abuse

**Version:** February 16, 2022  
**Urgency:** No  
**Hearing Date:** June 27, 2022

**Policy Vote:** HUMAN S. 5 - 0  
**Mandate:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Agnes Lee

**Bill Summary:** AB 2277 requires, instead of permits, a county to waive a California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program requirement for a recipient who has been identified as a past or present survivor of domestic violence, when good cause exists.

#### **Fiscal Impact:**

- The CA Department of Social Services (CDSS) estimates potential costs of \$9 million, but would depend on how many waiver referrals were granted. In addition, there may be costs associated with automation to implement the change.
- Cost to counties for administration would be potentially reimbursable by the state, subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates.

**Background:** CalWORKs, the state's largest anti-poverty program, provides temporary cash assistance aimed at moving children out of poverty and helping qualified low-income families meet their basic needs, such as rent, clothing, utility bills, food, and other items needed to ensure children are cared for at home and safely remain with their families. In addition to cash assistance, adult CalWORKs recipients are provided education and employment and training services designed to help remove barriers to work and promote self-sufficiency. These services are typically outlined in a Welfare-to-Work (WTW) plan.

Existing state law and regulation allows for the waiver of certain CalWORKs requirements for survivors of domestic violence. The CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) section 42-715.5 provides which CalWORKs program requirements counties can and cannot waive for a recipient who has been identified as a past or present victim of domestic abuse, when good cause has been established. Some specific requirements counties cannot waive include: asset, income, and deprivation requirements. Counties may waive: paternity establishment, time limit, work, education, and child support requirements. The MPP also requires counties to develop criteria for waiving requirements and states that counties can establish the duration of WTW and time limit waivers, as long as the granting of such waivers comply with the state and federal regulations. Current state law permits, but does not require, counties to waive CalWORKs program requirements for recipients that are identified as being survivors of domestic abuse.

**Proposed Law:** AB 2277 provides that counties are required, rather than allowed, to waive CalWORKs program WTW requirements for a recipient who has been identified

as a past or present victim of abuse, when it has been determined that good cause exists.

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