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THIRD READING

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Bill No: AB 689  
Author: Petrie-Norris (D), et al.  
Amended: 3/18/21 in Assembly  
Vote: 21

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SENATE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE: 4-0, 6/8/21  
AYES: Bradford, Kamlager, Skinner, Wiener  
NO VOTE RECORDED: Ochoa Bogh

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 75-0, 5/13/21 (Consent) - See last page for vote

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**SUBJECT:** Comprehensive Statewide Domestic Violence Program

**SOURCE:** Author

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**DIGEST:** This bill requires the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to provide financial and technical assistance to local domestic violence centers in implementing 24-hour crisis communication systems that include 24-hour phone services and may also include other communication methods offered on a 24-hour or intermittent basis, such as text messaging or computer chat.

**ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Comprehensive Statewide Domestic Violence Program (CSDVP) within Cal OES. (Pen. Code § 13823.15, subd. (a).)
- 2) States that the goals of the CSDVP are to provide local assistance to existing providers, to maintain and expand services based on the needs of the population, and to establish a directed program for the development of domestic

violence services in underserved areas. Requires Cal OES to provide financial and technical assistance to local domestic violence centers implementing all of the following services: 24 hour crisis hotlines, counseling, business centers, emergency safe homes/shelters for victims and families, emergency food and clothing, emergency response to calls from law enforcement, hospital emergency room protocol, emergency transportation, supportive peer counseling, counseling for children, court and social service advocacy, legal assistance with restraining orders, devices, and custody disputes, community resource and referral, and household establishment assistance. Requires that priority for financial and technical assistance be given to emergency shelter programs and safe homes for victims of domestic violence and their children. (Pen. Code § 13823.15, subd. (b).)

- 3) Establishes Cal OES and the specified advisory committee to collaboratively administer the Comprehensive Statewide Domestic Violence Program, and requires Cal OES to allocate funds to local centers meeting the criteria for funding. Requires all funded organizations utilize volunteers to the greatest extent possible. States that the centers may seek, receive, and make use of any funds which may be available from all public and private sources to augment state funds received. (Pen. Code § 13823.15, subd. (c).)
- 4) Defines “domestic violence shelter service provider” or “DVSSP” to mean “a victim services provider that operates an established system of services providing safe and confidential emergency housing on a 24-hour basis for victims of domestic violence and their children, including, but not limited to, hotel or motel arrangements, haven, and safe houses.” (Pen. Code § 13823.15, subd. (f)(15)(B).)

This bill requires Cal OES to provide financial and technical assistance to local domestic violence centers in implementing 24-hour crisis communication systems that must include 24-hour phone services and may also include other communication methods offered on a 24-hour or intermittent basis, such as text messaging, computer chat, or any other technology approved by Cal OES.

## **Background**

### *Modernization of Crisis Communication*

In recent year, several domestic violence service providers across the country have launched texting and web chat programs to supplement the phone hotlines which are utilized by victims of domestic violence. <<https://www.domesticshelters.org/articles/escaping-violence/survivors-can-now-text-for-help> ; <

journalonline.com/story/news/2021/01/25/volusia-beacon-center-abused-women-crisis-offers-text-line-daytona-domestic-violence/6602907002/ ; <<https://opdv.ny.gov/> ) Texting and chat programs offer a safe and private way for victims to contact service providers, and some programs are able to translate text.

The proponents of this bill assert that the statute requiring Cal OES to provide technical and financial assistance to local domestic violence centers needs to be updated. Specifically, they contend that the language in the statute referring to “twenty-four-hour crisis hotlines” should be amended to include other communication methods in addition to 24-hour phone hotlines, including text messaging, computer chat, or other technologies approved by Cal OES in order for service providers to receive the financial and technical assistance they currently receive for operating their 24-hour phone hotlines for those other services.

### *Effect of This Bill*

This bill modernizes California code to ensure that funding for and reporting about vital crisis communication services offered by Domestic Violence service provider include new text-based technology like computer chat lines and phone texting. By modernizing the requirements to include text-based optional services, Domestic Violence service providers will be better equipped to respond victims of domestic violence who may not feel safe or be able to call a traditional phone-based hotline. Additionally, the state will be better able to track and collect more accurate data about domestic abuse.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

**SUPPORT:** (Verified 6/21/21)

Alameda County District Attorney  
California Partnership to End Domestic Violence  
Human Options  
Laura’s House  
WEAVE

**OPPOSITION:** (Verified 6/21/21)

None received

**ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:** According to Human Options:

Sheltering in place is not always the safest option. With families quarantined and practicing social distancing, victims can become isolated and tensions can

rise. We know that in stressful times like this violence in an already unhealthy home is often exacerbated. Victims may not be able to safely reach out to us for help, and so we have to be proactive in providing education and outreach via as many channels as possible. During the first phase of stay-at home orders being lifted, the Crisis Hotline received an influx of calls and our emergency shelter reached capacity within a week.

1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men in the United States have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner. In a single day in 2019, 81% of California domestic violence shelters served 5,644 adults and children. The Covid-19 Pandemic has caused a dramatic increase in these already alarming rates. The stay-at-home order has forced individuals to stay indoors, meaning in many cases victims are trapped at home with their abusers. Additionally, the stay-at-home order has been associated with alcohol abuse, depression and post-traumatic stress symptoms, all which have been linked to increased likelihood of a domestic violence in the home. The Sacramento prosecutor's office has seen a 39% increase in police activity related to domestic violence.

On a typical day before the pandemic, domestic violence hotlines received approximately 13 calls a minute. As a result of the pandemic, the National Domestic Violence Hotline saw a 9% increase of calls, texts and chats—indicating a clear uptick in demand.

By modernizing the requirements to include text-based optional services, Domestic Violence centers will be better equipped to respond reports and help more victims of domestic violence. Additionally, the state will be better able to track and collect more accurate data about domestic abuse.

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 75-0, 5/13/21

AYES: Aguiar-Curry, Arambula, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Bigelow, Bloom, Boerner Horvath, Burke, Calderon, Carrillo, Chau, Chen, Chiu, Choi, Cooley, Cooper, Cunningham, Megan Dahle, Daly, Davies, Flora, Fong, Frazier, Friedman, Gabriel, Cristina Garcia, Eduardo Garcia, Gipson, Lorena Gonzalez, Gray, Grayson, Holden, Irwin, Jones-Sawyer, Kalra, Kiley, Lackey, Lee, Levine, Low, Maienschein, Mathis, Mayes, McCarty, Mullin, Muratsuchi, Nazarian, Nguyen, O'Donnell, Patterson, Petrie-Norris, Quirk, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Reyes, Luz Rivas, Robert Rivas, Rodriguez, Blanca Rubio, Salas, Santiago, Seyarto, Smith, Stone, Ting, Valladares, Villapudua, Voepel, Waldron, Ward, Akilah Weber, Wicks, Wood, Rendon

NO VOTE RECORDED: Cervantes, Gallagher, Medina

Prepared by: Kapri Walker / PUB. S. /  
6/24/21 16:08:22

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