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## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE PASSES VICTIM CENTER FUNDING**

Woodland, CA - September 4, 2007 - On Thursday, August 30<sup>th</sup> the Assembly Appropriations Committee voted to approve SB 153, sponsored by Senators Migden and Runner, which will increase the amount of penalty assessment money given to Victim and Child Advocacy Centers and the state witness protection program.

The portion of state penalty assessments previously used to fund Driver Training programs has not been used for its designated purpose since 1992, with the funds being reallocated by the Legislature to other purposes and to the state's General Fund.

Funding for Victim Centers, which are located within each county of the state, as well as Child Advocacy Centers (or Multi-Disciplinary Interview Centers) for child victims and their families has been severely lacking. Funding from the state for victim centers has been stagnant for almost a decade, forcing programs to either reduce staffing, cut services or look to local government for help in funding. Child Advocacy Centers rely heavily on fund raising and local government assistance to keep their programs going.

Yolo County took a significant statewide lead at the recent Appropriations Committee hearing at the State Capitol. Yolo County MDIC Director Cameron Handley organized the testimony of a sexual assault victim before committee members. Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig and Yolo DA Victim Services Director Karen Sifuentes were also present to lend their support.

The Yolo County Multi-Disciplinary Interview Center (MDIC) and Yolo County Victim Services Program, both located within the District Attorney's Office, will stand to gain more stable funding from the state. Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig stated, "I am thrilled that after working for three years to try to get this bill passed that victim centers will start receiving money to provide more services to the victims we serve." Victim Services Director Karen Sifuentes highlighted, "It's refreshing to finally see the focus put on our crime victims. We hope to bring into better balance the deserved rights of crime victims with the rights of defendants."

The bill goes to a final vote on the Assembly floor this week.

For more information contact: Victim Services Director Karen Sifuentes  
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