



CALIFORNIA STATE SENATOR FRAN PAVLEY 27th STATE SENATE DISTRICT

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Legislature approves bill to protect children from domestic violence

SACRAMENTO – The California Senate gave final, unanimous approval Thursday to a bill by Senator Fran Pavley (D-Agoura Hills) to protect children from domestic abusers during court proceedings and after offenders are released from prison or jail. The vote came a day after the measure was approved 78-0 by the Assembly.

Senate Bill 910, sponsored by Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey, closes a loophole that excludes children from being covered by protective orders issued by criminal courts.

“Sadly, children are often the first targets for revenge or abuse when a domestic violence offender is released,” Senator Pavley said. “Offering children the same protections we give to adult victims could mean the difference of life and death for a child.”

Domestic violence fatalities account for 12 percent of all homicides in California. Currently, courts may issue orders to protect spouses during criminal proceedings, and for up to 10 years after abusers are convicted. However, this protection does not extend to all children because of a narrow legal definition of domestic violence.

Family members must now request a new order to protect children in family court, which is often time-consuming and difficult, putting children at risk unless and until a new order is issued.

At a legislative hearing this spring, officials from the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office described a case in which a four-month old was hospitalized with a bruise under the eye and a fractured arm. A witness reported the father had punched the infant in the face to stop it from crying and stuffed a sock into the mouth but the criminal court could not issue a protective order.

“The most vulnerable Californians, including infants, are the only victims that are left unprotected by current law,” said Los Angeles County Special Assistant District Attorney and Yolo County Supervisor Jim Provenza. “This bill will ensure they receive the same protection as adult victims of family violence.”

SB 910 will be sent to Governor Jerry Brown for signature.

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