

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 21, 2010

Senate Joint Resolution

No. 24

Introduced by Senator Yee

(Coauthors: Senators Correa, DeSaulnier, Kehoe, Liu, and Padilla)

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Blumenfield, Brownley, Davis, Gilmore, Hall, Hill, Jones, Lieu, Monning, Nava, and Saldana)

February 22, 2010

Senate Joint Resolution No. 24—Relative to violence against women.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 24, as amended, Yee. Proposed federal International Violence Against Women Act.

This measure would urge the United States Congress to pass the International Violence Against Women Act, and establish the offices and policies therein.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Violence against women and girls is rooted in
2 multiple causes and takes many forms, including physical, sexual,
3 and psychological. It affects all countries, social groups, ethnicities,
4 religions, and socioeconomic classes and is a global health,
5 economic development, and human rights problem of epidemic
6 proportions; and

7 WHEREAS, According to the World Health Organization,
8 approximately one in three women in the world will experience
9 violence in her lifetime, with rates of up to 70 percent in some
10 countries, and one in five of the women in the world will be the
11 victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime; and

1 WHEREAS, According to the 2006 United Nations Secretary
2 General’s report entitled Ending Violence Against Women, 102
3 member states have no specific laws on domestic violence; and

4 WHEREAS, Women and girls face many different types of
5 gender-based violence, including forced or child marriage, so-called
6 “honor killings,” dowry-related murder, human trafficking, and
7 female genital mutilation. The United Nations estimates that at
8 least 5,000 so-called “honor killings” take place each year around
9 the world and that more than 130 million girls and young women
10 worldwide have been subjected to female genital mutilation; and

11 WHEREAS, The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
12 2006 Report on Gender-Based Violence and HIV/AIDS reports
13 that violence against women is a public health and development
14 problem that significantly increases susceptibility to HIV/AIDS.
15 A United Nations study on the global AIDS epidemic found that
16 in sub-Saharan Africa, women who are 15 to 24 years of age can
17 be infected at rates that are up to six times higher than men of the
18 same age; and

19 WHEREAS, Recent studies in Africa indicate that many girls
20 in primary and secondary school report sexual abuse or harassment
21 by male teachers or classmates. Girls who experience sexual
22 violence at school are also more likely to experience unintended
23 pregnancies or become infected with a sexually transmitted
24 infection, including HIV/AIDS; and

25 WHEREAS, Rape and sexual assault are weapons of war used
26 to torture, intimidate, and terrorize women and communities.
27 Amnesty International reports that women have suffered from
28 sexual violence during conflicts in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia,
29 Sierra Leone, and most recently in the Democratic Republic of the
30 Congo, where women have suffered from brutal and systematic
31 sexual assaults; and

32 WHEREAS, Displaced, refugee, and stateless women and girls
33 in humanitarian emergencies, conflict settings, and natural disasters
34 face extreme violence and threats because of power inequities,
35 including being forced to exchange sex for food and humanitarian
36 supplies, and being at increased risk of rape, sexual exploitation,
37 and abuse; and

38 WHEREAS, According to the United States Agency for
39 International Development (USAID): 70 percent of the 1.3 billion
40 people worldwide living in poverty are women and children,

1 two-thirds of the 876 million illiterate adults in the world are
2 women, two-thirds of the 125 million schoolaged children who
3 are not in school are girls, more than three-quarters of the 27
4 million refugees in the world are women and children, and 1,600
5 women die unnecessarily every day during pregnancy and
6 childbirth; and

7 WHEREAS, In 2003, the United Nations Special Rapporteur
8 on Violence Against Women concluded that violence against
9 women violates the basic human rights of women, results in
10 “devastating consequences for women who experience it, traumatic
11 impact on those who witness it, de-legitimization of states that fail
12 to prevent it and the impoverishment of entire societies that tolerate
13 it”; and

14 WHEREAS, Violence against women is an impediment to the
15 health, opportunity, and development of women and society.
16 According to an October 2006 study of the United Nations
17 Secretary General entitled Ending Violence Against Women,
18 “Violence against women impoverishes women, their families,
19 communities and nations. It lowers economic production, drains
20 resources from public services and employers, and reduces human
21 capital formation”; and

22 WHEREAS, The World Bank recognizes that women’s health,
23 education, and economic opportunities directly impact the
24 development and well-being of their families and society. A 2001
25 World Bank Report, entitled Engendering Development, reports
26 that greater gender equality leads to improved nutrition, lower
27 child mortality, less government corruption, higher productivity,
28 and reduced HIV infection rates; and

29 WHEREAS, Increased access to economic opportunities is
30 crucial to the prevention of and response to domestic and sexual
31 violence. Both microfinance-based interventions and increased
32 asset control have been shown to reduce levels of intimate partner
33 violence in addition to providing economic independence for
34 survivors; and

35 WHEREAS, Campaigns to change social norms, including
36 community organizing, media campaigns, and efforts to engage
37 and educate men and boys, have been shown to change attitudes
38 that condone and tolerate violence against women and girls and
39 reduce violence and abuse; and

1 WHEREAS, The International Violence Against Women Act
2 would create within the United States Agency for International
3 Development, the Office of Women’s Global Development, and
4 would establish the Office of Women’s Global Initiatives and the
5 Advisory Commission on International Violence Against Women;
6 within the U.S. Department of State, to develop a strategy and
7 direct resources to prevent and respond to violence against women
8 and girls throughout the world; and

9 WHEREAS, The act would establish policies to prevent and
10 respond to violence against women, including directing the
11 preparation of a five-year international strategy to prevent and
12 respond to violence against women and girls internationally,
13 collecting data and conducting research about efforts to prevent
14 and respond to violence, including information on violence against
15 women and girls in human rights reports, enhancing the training
16 of foreign military and police forces on violence against women
17 and girls, and authorizing the appropriation of \$5,000,000 annually
18 through fiscal year 2012 to support the United Nations
19 Development Fund for Women Trust Fund in Support of Actions
20 to Eliminate Violence Against Women; now, therefore, be it

21 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*
22 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California
23 hereby urges the United States Congress to pass the International
24 Violence Against Women Act, and establish the offices and policies
25 therein; and be it further

26 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
27 this resolution to each Senator and Representative from California
28 in the United States Congress, and to the author for appropriate
29 distribution.