

Introduced by Senator Yee

February 22, 2010

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SJR 24, as introduced, 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

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

15 WHEREAS, Women and girls face many different types of
16 gender-based violence, including forced or child marriage, so-called
17 “honor killings,” dowry-related murder, human trafficking, and

1 female genital mutilation. The United Nations estimates that at
2 least 5,000 so-called “honor killings” take place each year around
3 the world and that more than 130 million girls and young women
4 worldwide have been subjected to female genital mutilation; and

5 WHEREAS, The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
6 2006 Report on Gender-Based Violence and HIV/AIDS reports
7 that violence against women is a public health and development
8 problem that significantly increases susceptibility to HIV/AIDS.
9 A United Nations study on the global AIDS epidemic found that
10 in sub-Saharan Africa, women who are 15 to 24 years of age can
11 be infected at rates that are up to six times higher than men of the
12 same age; and

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

19 WHEREAS, Rape and sexual assault are weapons of war used
20 to torture, intimidate, and terrorize women and communities.
21 Amnesty International reports that women have suffered from
22 sexual violence during conflicts in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia,
23 Sierra Leone, and most recently in the Democratic Republic of the
24 Congo, where women have suffered from brutal and systematic
25 sexual assaults; and

26 WHEREAS, Displaced, refugee, and stateless women and girls
27 in humanitarian emergencies, conflict settings, and natural disasters
28 face extreme violence and threats because of power inequities,
29 including being forced to exchange sex for food and humanitarian
30 supplies, and being at increased risk of rape, sexual exploitation,
31 and abuse; and

32 WHEREAS, According to the United States Agency for
33 International Development (USAID): 70 percent of the 1.3 billion
34 people worldwide living in poverty are women and children,
35 two-thirds of the 876 million illiterate adults in the world are
36 women, two-thirds of the 125 million schoolaged children who
37 are not in school are girls, more than three-quarters of the 27
38 million refugees in the world are women and children, and 1,600
39 women die unnecessarily every day during pregnancy and
40 childbirth; and

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

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

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

23 WHEREAS, Increased access to economic opportunities is
24 crucial to the prevention of and response to domestic and sexual
25 violence. Both microfinance-based interventions and increased
26 asset control have been shown to reduce levels of intimate partner
27 violence in addition to providing economic independence for
28 survivors; and

29 WHEREAS, Campaigns to change social norms, including
30 community organizing, media campaigns, and efforts to engage
31 and educate men and boys, have been shown to change attitudes
32 that condone and tolerate violence against women and girls and
33 reduce violence and abuse; and

34 WHEREAS, The International Violence Against Women Act
35 would create within the United States Agency for International
36 Development, the Office of Women’s Global Development and
37 would establish the Office of Women’s Global Initiatives and the
38 Advisory Commission on International Violence Against Women,
39 within the U.S. Department of State, to develop a strategy and

1 direct resources to prevent and respond to violence against women
2 and girls throughout the world; and
3 WHEREAS, The act would establish policies to prevent and
4 respond to violence against women, including directing the
5 preparation of a five-year international strategy to prevent and
6 respond to violence against women and girls internationally,
7 collecting data and conducting research about efforts to prevent
8 and respond to violence, including information on violence against
9 women and girls in human rights reports, enhancing the training
10 of foreign military and police forces on violence against women
11 and girls, and authorizing the appropriation of \$5,000,000 annually
12 through fiscal year 2012 to support the United Nations
13 Development Fund for Women Trust Fund in Support of Actions
14 to Eliminate Violence Against Women; now, therefore, be it
15 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*
16 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California
17 hereby urges the United States Congress to pass the International
18 Violence Against Women Act, and establish the offices and policies
19 therein; and be it further
20 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
21 this resolution to each Senator and Representative from California
22 in the United States Congress, and to the author for appropriate
23 distribution.