

# BE BRAVE, SPEAK UP

The Quarterly Newsletter of the  
Family Violence Law Center's Policy Department



Photo credits: Andrea Silvestri  
Location: Downtown Oakland.

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“At any given moment  
you have the power to  
say this is not how the  
story is going to end.” -  
Christine Mason Miller

# Introducing Our New Team

Family Violence Law Center is excited to announce the expansion of our Policy Department. This year we have had the pleasure of bringing on three additional members to our Policy Department. Please welcome Feroz, Lily and Sadia.

- Feroz Anir has joined the Department as the Policy Advocate. She has a background in community organizing and writing on the relationship between national oppression, class struggle and women's exploitation, focusing on the ways in which global imperialism, and particularly the political economy of prostitution, has continued the exploitation and femicides of the most oppressed social stratum of women worldwide. Her passion around this work stems from her own forced recruitment into the sex trade as a teenage girl. She continues to organize in the community in favor of building an emancipated world for working and oppressed women.



Artists David Burke, Pancho Pescador, and Joevic Yeban

# Introducing our new Team

Lily Button has also joined our policy department as a student intern this semester. She is a second-year at UC Berkeley studying English and Legal Studies. Her passion for survivors' rights stems from her previous work with houseless individuals and victims of gentrification. At FVLC, she assists the team in researching the needs of incarcerated survivors and accessibility to legal counsel. On campus, she is also a news editor for The Daily Californian newspaper.



Sadia Khan has also joined our policy department as a Campaign Coordinator for the Domestic Violence and Gun Violence campaign. Sadia has worked on numerous campaigns including Fund the UC campaign, Prop 16, Students for Imam Jamil and Rise's camping for tuition free college. Over the past few years Sadia has worked on education policy and Title IX support for parenting students. Her work in supporting survivors with their educational goals led her to Family Violence Law Center where she hopes to support survivors in seeking safety and resources.

# FVLC Policy Work

## Legislative Priorities and Goals

- **Advocate for increased resources** including training and leadership development for survivor providers in order to enhance their ability to provide services.
- **Continued Collaborations** with other GBV advocates to fund (1) violence intervention at levels more consistent with survivor needs, (2) violence prevention work consistently in the public sector, and (3) resources for survivors beyond the time of crisis for long-term sustainability.
- **Advance system-level training** for public, human service, legal agencies in order to improve how survivors experience working with public agencies and systems.
- **Engage in cross-collaborative violence prevention** and intervention advocacy with a focus on racial equity.

## Policy Campaigns

Family Violence Law Center is excited to introduce two policy campaigns that seek to support survivors in providing safety and shifting the narrative around survivor support. Our two new campaigns include **Pathways to Safety** and **Right to Exit**

### **Pathways to Safety Campaign**

**Pathways to Safety** is a year long educational and policy focused campaign that seeks to examine and uplift the intersections of domestic violence and gun violence. When a person who causes harm has access to a firearm a domestic violence survivor is five times more likely to be killed. It is for this reason that Family Violence Law Center seeks to educate survivors on various pathways to seeking safety including the use of legal

# Campaigns & Policy Work

avenues such as gun violence restraining orders and domestic violence restraining orders. In over half of the domestic violence homicides nationwide a firearm was used to harm the victim.

## **Right to Exit Campaign**

Right to Exit is a one year campaign that will explore from a rights perspective, the realities of exploitation, control, domination and abuses that impact gender based violence survivors. This campaign will examine the industry of forced prostitution and sex trafficking, gaps in the criminal and civil legal systems that negatively impact survivors, fundamentally abusive marriages and relationships that are organized around domestic violence. There is an overwhelming need for service providers, agencies and organizations that work to prevent and intervene in circumstances concerning gender-based forms of persecution to

address the economic and material realities of survivors during the crisis and well beyond. This campaign aims to solidify the full-humaneity of the most exploited social sections of survivors within our locale, by grasping their social environment by its root, and understanding the multitude of ways in which the threat of homelessness and gender-based violence continue to be a looming danger to our communities.

## **Bills we are supporting:**

Family Violence Law Center will be advocating for a number of issues at the local, state and federal level. Some of our policy work includes:

### **Local**

**Eviction Moratorium:** We are happy to announce the cities of Oakland, San Leandro and Berkeley have adopted resolutions to extend

# FVLC Policy Work

the moratorium period for an additional 60 days past the Alameda County moratorium.

## State:

At the state level our team has created a portfolio of bills to support, on topics ranging from domestic violence restraining orders, gun violence prevention, safer housing, and teen dating violence education. Some of the bills we have identified include:

- **AB 667 (Asm Maienschein)**  
Firearms: gun violence restraining orders.
- The current GVRO allows for a restraining order to be put in place for 1-5 years, with the option to renew for up to 5 more years. This bill will increase the renewal period to a maximum of 10 years instead of 5.
- **AB 28 (Asm Gabriel)**  
Firearms: gun violence protection tax.

Bill will enact a tax on firearms and ammunition sales to fund programs that protect against gun violence.

- **AB 1071 (Asm Hoover)**  
Comprehensive teen dating violence prevention education.



Telegraph Ave Mural By Rachel Wolfe-Goldsmith

# FVLC Policy Work

- This bill would require the Department of Education to make (1) information about the comprehensive teen dating violence prevention education, (2) resources on abuse, including sexual, emotional, and physical abuse, and teen dating violence prevention for professional learning purposes, and (3) other relevant materials for parents, guardians, and other caretakers of pupils, available on its website.

**AB 12 (Asm Haney) Tenancy:** security deposits.

- This bill will prohibit a landlord from demanding or receiving security for a rental agreement for residential property in an amount or value in excess of an amount equal to one month's rent, in addition to any rent for the first month paid on or before initial occupancy.

## Federal

At the federal level we will be advocating for the Deposit Act, as introduced by Congresswoman Lee.

**HR 1087 (Congresswoman Lee)**

To authorize security deposit and moving costs assistance for low-income households, and for other purposes.

## Presentations

- The Policy Department presented a workshop, *Making Choices to Stay Safe* at UC Berkeley's Clark Kerr Campus for the *25th Annual Peer Resource & Ethnic Studies Conference* on March 16, 2023 from 8AM-4PM. This workshop will be a public introduction of our campaigns, **Pathways to Safety** and **Right to Exit**.



UC Berkeley, Clark Kerr Campus

# FVLC Advocacy Efforts

## Advocacy Efforts

The FVLC Policy team worked with our partner organization Moms Demand Action (pictured below) to advocate for gun safety bills at the State Capitol on March 13th.

### Supported legislation included:

- ***SB 2 (Sen Portantino)***  
Firearms, which will strengthen concealed carry laws in CA.
- ***AB 28 (Asm Gabriel)*** Firearms: gun violence protection tax, which will enact a tax on firearms and ammunition sales to fund programs that protect against gun violence.

When firearms are present in situations where domestic violence has occurred or continues to occur, victims are more likely to experience more severe physical abuse, and more likely to end up killed than in situations where firearms are not present in the home. At Family Violence Law Center we believe it is imperative for our team to advance survivor safety by advocating with partner organizations on issues like firearms. Gun safety bills are just one of the ways our team hopes to ensure the safety of our community.



# HUD DV Bonus

FVLC receives funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to integrate survivors of GBV into the homeless services system. The following are updates:

- **Leadership Board**

FVLC currently serves on the Leadership Board of the Continuum of Care (CoC), and the Policy and Advocacy Manager joined the Leadership Board in Fall 2022 as a representative of the Racial Equity Committee. An important update in this work is that **Homebase** will transition into serving as the staffing agency to the CoC. There has been a request to review the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count data with the consulting group contracted to conduct the count. Updates on homeless services in the city of Oakland include that the Wood Street navigation center is open and the 66th Ave RV Safe Parking site is open, starting with 75 spaces and later expanding to 100.

- **Racial Equity Committee**

The Racial Equity Committee of the Continuum of Care seeks to build

equity into the homeless service system by prioritizing the experiences of those who have had the worst outcomes with racial discrimination, embedding racial equity into the solutions offered to combat systemic barriers to remaining housed, and providing a racial equity lens in the decision-making process.

- **HMIS Oversight**

All CoCs are responsible for the oversight and operation of a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which is a local information technology system used to collect, store and report client-level information about individuals who are seeking services to resolve homelessness or the risk of homelessness.

HMIS is designed to improve effectiveness and efficiency for clients. FVLC will no longer serve on the HMIS Oversight Committee once the change in governance structure for the CoC is complete.

# Imprisonment of DV Survivors

FVLC intern Lily Button has been leading our research on the impact of **imprisonment of survivors of domestic violence**. Below is a summary of our findings thus far:

Survivors have often been arrested for fighting back against their abusers. The leading cause of female arrests in 2017 was drug abuse violations and property crimes. Further, drug use is often a result of coercion from battering partners, financial escape from economic dependency, or psychological relief from abuse. From 2013 to 2017, **drug arrests for women increased by 24.7%**, according to FBI data.

Studies show that a recent increase in state mandatory arrest laws correlates to a greater number

of female arrests for cases of domestic violence. This includes dual arrests, in which the survivor-victim is arrested for committing an offense as a result of self-defense or in response to patterns of an abusive relationship.

In some dual arrest cases, the survivors receive harsher punishments than their attackers when a weapon was involved.

The misidentification of survivors of domestic violence is a critical issue in the United States. For example, evidence of an arrest, regardless of a conviction, can result in deportation or hinder access to survivor services such as childcare or financial aid. The arrest of female survivors responding to their abusers has

lasting effects which continue the cycle of domestic violence abuse.



# GBV Provider Coalition of Alameda County

**The Gender Based Violence Coalition of Alameda County** (the Coalition) wants to raise the profile on responses to GBV. One way to do that is meeting the new elected officials in our communities. The Coalition met with Supervisor Lena Tam's office on March 2 to introduce the work of providers in the coalition to the Supervisor's staff. The Coalition also met with newly elected Sheriff, Yesenia Sanchez, to discuss ways for the Sheriff to be a good partner to the community, the work of the coalition, ways to support incarcerated survivors, homelessness prevention, and enforcement of Restraining Orders.

## Keep an eye out:

- The Coalition will continue to meet with other new elected officials and their staff.
- **FVLC Podcast:** At FVLC we understand the need to engage in multi-media advocacy and support for survivors. A part of our work includes shifting the narrative around impacts of abuse, how to support survivors and combating harmful narratives. In an effort to shed light on one of the many ways survivors face abuse Family Violence Law Center will be recording our first podcast series, "A Survivor's Story" this summer.
- **Economic Abuse Series** (multi-media) the Policy Department will continue providing information on how economic abuse impacts survivors.



Oakland, Ca  
Artist @tallerxochicura

**Want to help us continue making an impact for survivors in Alameda County?**

*Please consider donating to  
Family Violence Law Center!*

**To donate, click HERE**



Founded in 1978, Family Violence Law Center (FVLC) helps diverse communities in Alameda County heal from domestic violence and sexual assault, advocating for justice and healthy relationships. We provide survivor-centered legal and crisis intervention services, offer prevention education for youth and other community members, and engage in policy work to create systemic change.

*In court and in our community, every day.*

**<http://fvlc.org/> \* [info@fvlc.org](mailto:info@fvlc.org) \* 1.800.947.8301 (24 hrs./day)**