

BE BRAVE, SPEAK UP

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



Art from the Red Women's Poster Collective

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“ Much depends on us, the
women workers. The days
are passed when the
success of the workers’
cause depends only on the
organization of men.” -
Alexandria Kollontai

Welcome Message

Advancing the Labor Struggle and Rights of Working Women – Nicole Adibi, Policy Intern Family Violence Law Center

Welcome to the FVLC Policy Newsletter, your trusted gateway to information on current social issues and transformative change through awareness and action. This newsletter is designed to serve policymakers, advocates, and those passionate about policy reform. Please stay tuned for thought provoking articles and upcoming events that offer space for deeper reflection and conversation into these pressing issues.

Have you ever wondered about the challenges faced by female workers in non-unionized industries? In this edition, we shine a light on this vital issue, which disproportionately affects vulnerable populations such as undocumented immigrants and minorities. We'll explore gendered disparities in wage theft and workplace sexual violence and assault while providing insights and solutions. Join us in this essential conversation and be part of the community dedicated to creating a brighter world.



More Art from the Red Women's Poster Collective

Think Piece

In August 2023, members of FVLC's policy team attended the Valor Sexual Assault Conference, which brought together gender-based violence advocates from around the country to address the pervasive issues regarding sexual assault and gendered oppression. This event presented us with the opportunity to develop new knowledge and apply this in tangible ways to the policy work we do to support survivors in the future. The Conference featured a presentation entitled *Combatting Sexual Violence and Wage Theft Against Women in the Non-Unionized Janitorial Industry*, led by members of the Maitence Cooperation Trust Fund (MCTF), a nationally-recognized statewide watchdog dedicated to advocating for the labor rights of workers within the janitorial industry, which emphasized that gendered disparities in wage theft and sexual exploitation in the workplace fall hardest on Latina women and other vulnerable populations such as those served by Family Violence Law Center.

Not only do masses of vulnerable women within these non-unionized and cheap labor industries face sexual violence and exploitation on the job from supervisors and coworkers, but, they go home to find a similarly uneven power hierarchy, creating a double nexus of exploitation in the workplace and in the home. Women within the MCTF have fought for years to advance the conditions of these un-unionized janitorial workers through programs including Know-Your-Rights presentations (the Know Your Rights Worker Academy) and self-defense classes to fight back against the imminent threat of sexual violence (the Industrial Promotoras Project). The MCTF has also developed programs to recruit men into the labor struggle and to develop men as allies to disrupt sexual violence in the workplace. FVLC's policy team focuses on the need for survivors to find safe housing and stable employment to support economic mobility. The panel led by the brave women organizers of the MCTF provided us with new knowledge about specific troubles facing women in non-unionized and low-wage employment industries, and also helped us recommit to these organizational values that we hold dear to our work and advocacy. Low-wage female workers represent a disproportionate amount of survivors served by FVLC, and we are dedicated to building a better society for them.

***The Public and Private Patriarchal Spheres:
Labor Exploitation and Wage Theft of
Working Women – Ashleigh Stuart,
Policy Advocate Family Violence Law Center***

Policy Work & Campaigns

In this legislative cycle, the policy department advocated for 24 different bills at the state and federal level, with priorities ranging from domestic violence prevention, housing security for survivors, medical reporting mandate, gun violence prevention, supporting survivors of trafficking, as well as court procedures relating to survivors. We are particularly pleased to share that AB 28: Firearms and Ammunition: Excise Tax is on its way to the Governor's desk to be signed into law after passing both houses, and we are confident that Governor Newsom will sign AB 28 into law, creating a permanent funding stream to fund gun violence prevention and gun violence education for our youth.

Policy Campaigns: Family Violence Law Center policy campaigns include Pathways to Safety and Right to Exist, both seek to educate survivors on their rights and help survivors find the necessary resources to safely exit harmful settings.

Pathways to Safety: Over the summer, the Pathways to Safety Campaign invited legal and policy experts to speak about the impacts of gun violence, how to support survivors of gun violence, and what we can do as a community to create solutions to gun violence within our community. We also hosted a



Cesar Chavez & Dolores Huerta mural, Viva La Causa, in San Francisco, Artsits: "Kookie" Gonzalez and Suaro Cervantes

campaign-focused National Night Out on August 1, 2023, with partners Lao Family Community Development, Ruby's Place and the Family Justice Center. In this event, we enjoyed BBQ, games and giveaway school supplies, and educated 150+ participants on gun violence restraining orders and other safety tips on gun violence prevention.

Right to Exit: The Right to Exit campaign fights for the fundamental human right for those that are abused, exploited or trafficked to escape fundamentally

harmful circumstances and receive long-term intervention and resources to change their lives. It believes in a future wherein society itself is set up for women and other marginalized sectors to thrive. In July and August 2023, we created a Summer Safety Series to increase community knowledge of gender-based violence by providing legal resources and expertise from direct service providers, community organizers and legal professionals.

The Right to Exit Campaign facilitated two Webinars, Consent and Healthy Boundaries, and Digital Safety in our Communities. We invited Esperanza Fonseca, labor organizer and survivor of prostitution, and Dahlia Locke, co-chair of the Youth Coalition at World We, for a conversation about the culture of consent and misconceptions about the commercial sex industry.



“Working Class For An Affordable Mission” directed and designed by Lucia Gonzalez Ippolito, and painted by Pancho Pescador d Pablo Ruiz Arroyo.

The second webinar tackled digital safety and featured Juleimy Lopez, an FVLC Crisis Intervention Specialist and passionate advocate for survivors of gender-based violence, and Maria Palazzolo, a Senior Staff Attorney at Legal Assistance for Seniors, for a conversation about harm and exploitation within the digital realm. These two webinars worked to expose the ways in which society is organized around the interests of exploiters, and underscored the need to improve circumstances for the subjugated and marginalized.

HOME Cohort: HOME Cohort Advocacy committee has recently interviewed various housing agencies and engaged lawmakers to support our policy proposal to remove application fees for survivors. The Advocacy committee is gathering data and information about current best practices in order to draft a bill proposal for the 25-26 legislative cycle.

GBV Provider Coalition of Alameda County: As part of our work with the Gender-Based Violence Coalition of Alameda County, FVLC is working with the Alameda County Continuum of Care to build an access point for survivors. To do this, it will be essential to understand how survivor providers work to help survivors acquire housing. FVLC will work with service providers to see if and how the Alameda County system works for survivors who are accessing housing services.

Current Events & Updates

OUSD Work with Chantel: FVLC's youth and policy teams work closely on violence prevention projects with Oakland youth. As part of this work, Gender-Based Violence Educator, Chantel Everett, created a Jeopardy game for youth where they are exposed to knowledge about privacy rights, consent, boundaries, and laws and policies related to gender-based violence. Policy and Advocacy Manager, Tunisia Owens, enjoyed playing game show host at a wellness event for youth where the Jeopardy game was featured.



Photo of Chantel playing Gender-Based Violence Jeopardy, students answered questions around consent boundaries, domestic violence, and won prizes!

Racial Equity Work Title 6 for BART:

FVLC serves on the Title 6 Advisory Board for BART and attends quarterly meetings to advise and advocate for equity issues related to public transportation. BART invited organizations to this Advisory Board in order to create equitable solutions to transportation issues that arise and have unintended consequences for some

community members. FVLC advocates for safety on BART and affordability for survivors, many of whom are women of color with lower incomes.

Oakland Police Chief Search: In Oakland, there have been multiple community engagement events to ask the public what they are looking for in the new Chief of Police, during which community members raised concerns about police harassment, negligence, and the rise in crimes involving gun violence and home robberies. FVLC's policy team attended to share our expert knowledge around gender-based violence, and what this means in our pursuit for a new Chief. We conveyed that oftentimes, domestic violence, intimate partner abuse, sexual assault, rape, sex trafficking and other forms of gender-based violence are not seen as legitimate social issues of concern but are often subordinated or attached to other problems, and requested that the new Chief undergo the education and training on the devastating impacts of gender-based violence in our families and communities.



FVLC Policy Department marches in Sacramento in support of Ab28, which is the Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety Act

Meet Our Interns!

Over Summer and Fall 2023, FVLC had the pleasure of hosting interns who surveyed their communities on the impacts of violence and potential solutions. These are their stories.

Nicole: I am a native born Iranian. I have proudly called the United States my home for the past thirteen years. I hold an undergraduate degree in Psychology which has sparked my passion for driving change through legal and policy channels. My mission centers on empowering marginalized communities through advocacy and community development. My previous role in legal advocacy has granted me invaluable insights into the diverse needs of individuals from various backgrounds. Looking ahead, my ultimate goal is to attend law school, where I can further hone my skills and embrace the legal perspective in my commitment to public service. I aspire to play a meaningful role in shaping policy reforms for a more equitable and just society.

Zeeshan: I am originally from Bangladesh. I am a high school student in Berkeley now, but I moved to the US 4 years ago and it was a big challenge for me to learn English. It wasn't easy, but I never gave up. I'm a big fan of psychology. I love learning about how our brains work and discovering new things about ourselves. When I'm not studying, I enjoy going to the gym,

getting good sleep, and exploring interesting ideas about the mind and nature. I love to spend time watching the sunset and sunrise, these two things bring new ideas about myself and my feelings. I chose to be a part of the Center for Youth Development through Law program and be placed with FVLC's Policy Department this summer because the law is important to my family. My father is a lawyer in Bangladesh, and when we moved here, he left his successful career behind to give us a better future. He is still actively engaged with the legal field, and when I see his dedication to the law it inspired me to pursue the legal field to find out if I'm suitable for this profession.

Princess: Our summer intern Princess currently attends high school. I am studying law and social justice at my high school, which is one of the career and education pathways that we can take. This upcoming school year, I will be entering the 11th grade. I play tennis and particularly enjoy spending time with family and friends when I am not engaging in leadership development and social justice projects. As an adult, I hope to have a career in the legal field with a particular focus on giving back to my community. One of the most important things I have learned is that property ownership is a powerful tool, therefore, I am very interested in real estate and economic development.

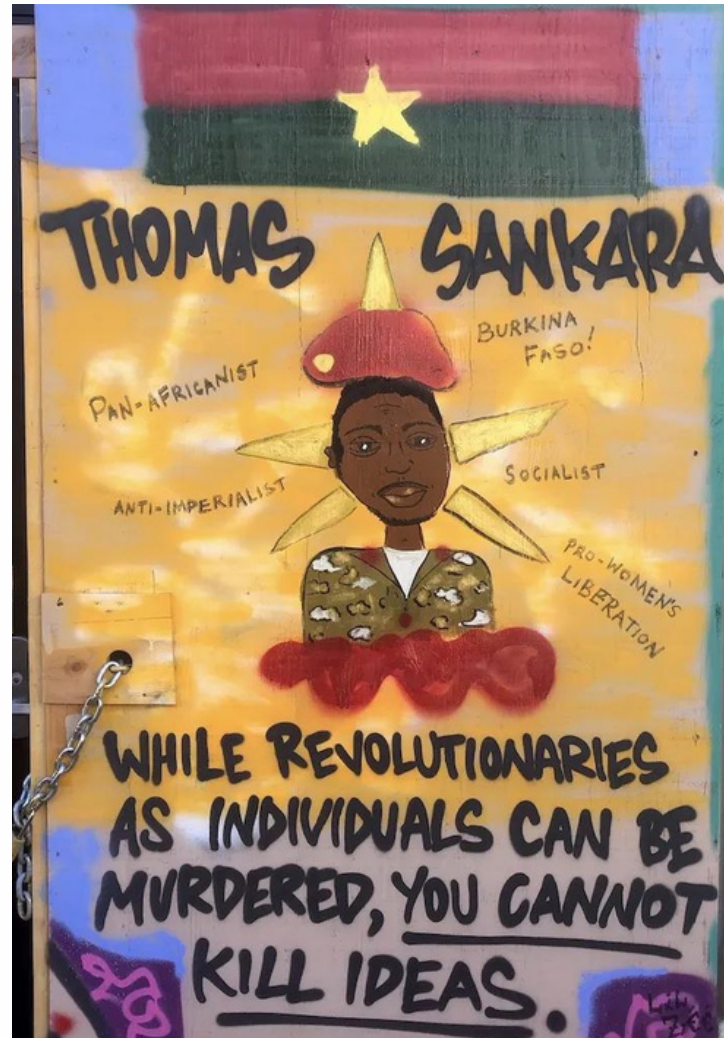
Keep an eye out!

My summer internship with FVLC helped me understand that the law is exciting once you realize that using your voice and speaking up can influence many things.

Keep an eye out: For our new policy priorities for the 24-26 legislative cycle, our Summer Safety Series Sessions on the Youtube FVLC Page, as well as our Domestic Violence Awareness Month campaign **Economic Mobility: How Can Survivor's Thrive?**

Additionally, we will be hosting our **Annual event on October 5th at Sobra Mesa, Oakland from 6:30pm until 9:30pm.** Join us in celebrating the wonderful accomplishments of our team over the past year!

Oakland Mural featuring working woman's champion Thomas Sankara by the Community Rejuvenation Project. painted in November, 2015.



Portrait of Thomas Sankara, longtime freedom fighter for working women, in downtown Oakland, Artist: unknown

“Women’s fate is bound up with that of an exploited male. However, this solidarity must not blind us in looking at the specific situation faced by womenfolk in our society. It is true that the woman worker and simple man are exploited economically, but the worker wife is also condemned further to silence by her worker husband.” - Thomas Sankara

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 * 1.800.947.8301 (24 hrs./day)