

SAMPLE LETTER ON SB 1523

Below you will find a sample letter for you to send to the Chair of The California Senate Public Safety Commission, Senator Gloria Romero. Please also send copies of your letter to the other members of the Committee, as well as Senator Kuehl, who is the sponsor of SB 1523. The names and addresses are on a separate list at the end of the letter text.

Senator Gloria Romero
Senate Public Safety Committee
State Capitol, Room 2031
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: (916) 445-4688

Re: SB 1523 (Kuehl) – Senate Public Safety Committee

Dear Senator Romero:

On behalf of (**name of organization**), I am writing in support of SB 1523 (Kuehl), which would ensure that battered women with limited English proficiency (LEP) are able to access essential police protection, prosecution and victim medical and support services.

SB 1523 (Kuehl) requires law enforcement agencies to adopt procedures and techniques to ensure timely effective and accurate communication with LEP persons at the scene of a domestic violence incident, mandates law enforcement training curriculum to include procedures and techniques to ensure effective communication with victims and witnesses at the scene, and allows the Victims Compensation and Government Claims Board to reimburse LEP crime victims for the expenses of language interpreter services that are incurred during the law enforcement investigation and prosecution of a crime or during medical services that became necessary as a direct result of the crime.

In addition to the obstacles that all victims face in leaving an abusive relationship, battered immigrant women also face language barriers, which can make access to the criminal justice system even more difficult. Given that the most common entry point to the criminal justice system is through contact with a law enforcement official, it is problematic that most law enforcement agencies do not have protocols or mechanisms in place for aiding victims or witnesses with limited English proficiency.

Law enforcement officers often rely on friends, neighbors, children of the battered woman or even the abuser to act as an interpreter for the victim. The use of unqualified interpreters can result in a failure to respond by law enforcement, inadequate or inaccurate police reports which lead to a failure to prosecute, wrongful arrest and conviction of the victim and further violence against the victim that has, on some occasions, even resulted in death. Lack of communication with limited-English proficient victims, witnesses, suspects, and community members not only jeopardizes the safety of domestic violence victims, but also creates evidentiary and investigative challenges.

(**Insert story or data from your own program's experience.**)

Sincerely,

Your Name here

SEND COPIES OF YOUR LETTER TO CHAIRWOMAN ROMERO TO THE FOLLOWING:

Senator Dave Cogdill (Vice Chair of the Committee)

State Capitol, Room 3048
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Gilbert Cedillo

State Capitol, Room 5100
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Bob Margett

State Capitol, Room 3082
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Don Perata

State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Please also send a copy of the letter to the sponsor of the bill:

Senator Sheila Kuehl

State Capitol, Room 5108
Sacramento, CA 95814