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August 22, 2013

Governor Edmund G. Brown
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento CA 95814
VIA FAX: (916) 558-3160

Re: Request for Signature – AB 139 (Holden)

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of *<insert organization name here>*, I write in support of AB 139 (Holden), related to Domestic Violence Fees. This bill will make important clarifications to existing law and improve the assessment and collection of these fees.

Existing law imposes an administrative fee of \$500 on every person who is granted probation for a crime of domestic violence. Once probationers remit their payments, each county is required to deposit two-thirds of the payments into a domestic violence special fund dedicated to supporting local shelters; collection entities are to remit the remaining one-third of the payments to the State to support statewide domestic violence activities.

A recent state audit revealed that courts and counties have been inconsistent in their collection and distribution of fees charged to offenders convicted of domestic violence. As these fees ultimately go to local domestic violence shelters, these inconsistencies have led to a significant reduction in available funding for domestic violence victims, and reduced accountability for individuals convicted of domestic violence crimes.

Among the auditor's recommendations was that the Legislature clarify the type of assessment to ensure consistency across counties. AB 139 would clarify that the \$500 payment is an administrative fee, and not a punitive fine, therefore the offender must pay unless the judge determines they are financially unable. This clarification is important because it would ensure the Legislature's intent to use portions of the \$500 fee to generate funding for local domestic violence programs.

On behalf of *<insert organization name here>*, I urge you to sign this important legislation into law.

Sincerely,

<insert name and title here>

Cc: Assembly Member Chris Holden, Author (916) 319-2141 (FAX)
California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (916) 444-7165 (FAX)