

A Bill becomes Law: California Senate Bill 1178.

We have been sharing information and updates about **California Senate Bill 1178** since we learned of its proposal. Partners in Prevention feel very strongly that it is an important tool in the safety awareness toolkit of all children.

SB 1178 encourages schools to display posters letting children know how to report child abuse. Anyone working in child abuse prevention knows it is extremely difficult for children to tell others they are being hurt and threatened by someone in their lives. For some, this stems from not knowing *who* to safely tell. Or they confide in a friend who most likely does not know what to do with that information. These posters provide the essential information needed for children to reach out for help for themselves or a friend.

All too frequently we hear news of children, now adults, who were unable to tell what was happening to them at the time it occurred. Many children who are sexually abused, are not likely to disclose their abuse at all; others wait until years after the abuse has stopped to tell. Any tool that lets children know it is absolutely okay to tell what is happening and points to a safe listener is essential to their protection.

A similar bill was first established in Texas in 2013, followed by Nevada, and in California SB 1178 was authored by Senator Andy Vidak. "Keeping our children safe from predators is a top priority," said Vidak, "I'm grateful for the unanimous bipartisan support SB 1178 received... Child abuse affects children of every age, race and income level. Sadly, it can often come from a person the child trusts... Current mandated reporting laws only work if there are signs of abuse, but we need to help protect children who are victims of abuse that isn't evident."

PIP joined the forces of Children's Advocacy Centers and Child Abuse Prevention Councils to let our elected officials know of our strong support. After Texas enacted the bill, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services received 38,000 more calls of suspected abuse than the prior year.

On **Tuesday, August 23, 2016 the bill was signed into law** by California Governor Jerry Brown. Unfortunately, wording in the law only encourages school districts, charter schools, and private schools to display posters.

We feel strongly it should be required.

The bill goes on to say "This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute."

We agree that this should take place immediately.

The full wording of SB 1178 can be found here:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB1178

In April of 2018 Partners in Prevention and the ten Greater Bay Area CAPCs launched a pilot program for the implementation of SB 1178. Three poster concepts were created.



All three poster concepts have two versions, where colors and messaging are kept lighter, brighter and less intimidating for the younger kids.

1. Bold hand lettering of the Speak Out message and emoji like character communicate urgency but take out the formality of the reporting and makes it more immediate and relatable.
2. The scribbles in crayon and pen create a dark space from which the light, hopeful Speak Out message field emerges.
3. Here the visual language of text messaging makes reaching out and getting help seem easy and part of the everyday flow of the way kids communicate.

Ultimately one of the Speak Out poster designs was adopted to be distributed within Greater Bay Area communities and was adapted by PiP to accommodate each county's appropriate emergency number for children to call.

We are very excited to see this vitally important tool in action.