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## Press Release

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### Assemblymembers Garcia & Low, Lt. Governor Kounalakis, Women's Justice Advocates & Reform Minded Prosecutors Celebrate Overwhelming Passage of AB 1171 "Spousal Rape" on the Assembly Floor.

*After a fierce fight to get "Spousal Rape" bill heard on the Assembly Floor, the vote is overwhelming 74-0. The modernization of California's archaic spousal rape code is one step closer to passage.*

(Sacramento)—Yesterday, California State Assemblymembers voted overwhelmingly in favor of modernizing and equalizing California's spousal rape law. A strong coalition of woman's justice advocates and reform minded prosecutors joined bill author and Chair of Legislative Woman's Caucus Assemblymember Cristina Garcia (D- Bell Gardens) in celebrating the overwhelming vote, "From the beginning of our efforts, we have been clear that rape is rape. And a marriage license is not an excuse for committing one of society's most violent and sadistic crimes. AB 1171 will put the power of law to help enforce that truth!" said Assemblymember Garcia.

Bill joint author Assemblymember Evan Low (D-Silicon Valley) added, "Today we sent a clear message to sexual predators that rape is rape, regardless of whether the victim is a stranger or spouse. I want to thank Assemblymember Cristina Garcia, District Attorney Jeff Rosen, Michele Dauber, and Kolieka Seigle for their bold leadership in getting AB 1171 onto the Floor and passed through the Assembly."

AB 1171 aims to bring California's rape statutes into parity by requiring the same standards for "spousal rape" that is currently in the Penal Code for nonspousal rape by eliminating the "spousal rape exception" in the California Penal Code for n (Section 262) and ensure that "spousal rape" treats and punishes perpetrators as seriously as the rape of a non-spouse. Although marital rape is illegal in all 50 states, California is one of nine states that distinguishes "spousal rape" from "rape."

The bill is supported by a strong coalition of advocates and prosecutors including Stanford professor and women's rights advocate, Michele Dauber, Kolieka Seigle Executive Director of CA NOW, and a several reform-minded CA prosecutors, including the DA Tori Verber Salazar (San Joaquin County,) DA George Gascon (Los Angeles County,) DA Chesa Boudin (County and City of San Francisco), DA Diana Benton (Contra Costa County), and DA Jeff Rosen (Santa Clara County).

Lt. Governor Eleni Kounalakis stated "I am heartened that the Assembly approved AB 1171 with overwhelming bipartisan support. Modernizing California's spousal rape statutes is an important step forward in ensuring fairness in the law, and also achieving equal justice for all victims of rape in California."

San Joaquin County District Attorney Tori Verber-Salazar concluded, “I believe AB 1171 will give victims of spousal rape hope that the crimes committed against them will be justly punished. It’s a great day for them. They are the people who count!”

“The first question a rape victim is asked should not be whether or not they are married. Rape is rape,” concluded Garcia.

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**The 58<sup>th</sup> Assembly District includes the cities of Montebello, Pico Rivera, Commerce, Bell Gardens, Downey, Norwalk, Bellflower, Cerritos, and Artesia.**