

Bigger issue is how employers can help prevent domestic violence

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On March 4, The Bee made it very easy to access key employment information for state workers. In doing so, The Bee also increased risk for state employees who are victims of stalking or domestic violence and everyone who works with them.

WEAVE supports transparency but feels it must remind The Bee to consider an extra level of self-scrutiny in meeting its mission to provide a trusted and valued source of news to our community.

The information and search tool provided by The Bee is housed on a database controlled by an employer – the state of California. Assigning blame detracts from our collective efforts to find solutions for increasing workplace safety for victims of domestic violence and stalking.

WEAVE provides counseling and legal services to more than 5,000 women each year, many of whom are employed in businesses in our community. These women overcome incredible obstacles and challenges as they hide from their abusers and work to keep themselves and their family members safe.

Employers have an obligation to ensure that their employees are safe when they are on the job. State law provides legal protection for victims of domestic violence and stalking in the workplace.

With more than 13,000 acts of domestic violence occurring in workplaces each year, domestic violence places an unfortunate liability on employers. The risk can be minimized when an employer puts systems in place to recognize and respond to the domestic violence in their employees' lives.

We encourage every California employer to learn from this situation by examining its own vulnerability. Do policies allow victims to limit the information made available to the public? Do strategies exist to protect all employees when a threat exists? Do workplace policies conform to state law regarding domestic violence and stalking victims? Have you assessed the ease of access to employees or to information about their locations?

Anyone who thinks they or someone they work with may be experiencing domestic violence is encouraged to contact WEAVE's 24-Hour crisis and information line at (916) 920-2952 or visit our Web site at

www.weaveinc.org.