



**WEAVE CEO Beth Hassett's Statement from December 14, 2017
Press Conference Announcing Partnership to Create Survivor-Centered Response
to Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence in California State Senate.**

Thank you to the Senate leaders whose efforts are creating a victim-centered response to addressing sexual harassment and assault for Senate employees.

WEAVE has been the safe place for victims of sexual violence to seek support and assistance for the past 30 years. I know firsthand that the decision for a survivor to share her story is equal parts risk and courage.

The more than 140 women who signed onto the "we said enough" letter found the courage, took that risk and gave voice to thousands of survivors in California.

Beginning in January, WEAVE will provide a Confidential Advocate who will be accessible to Senators and Senate staffers through a confidential telephone number, confidential email address, and in-person appointments at a nearby office. The Confidential Advocate will provide emotional support, discuss reporting options, and offer internal and external resources to Senators and Senate staffers who have experienced sexual misconduct. Additionally, WEAVE will educate Senators, staffers, and those interfacing with them about sexual misconduct in an effort to change the culture of the Capitol community and ensure victim safety.

WEAVE offers survivor-centered and trauma-informed services with an assurance of confidentiality, which is not available through any other partnership. As the sole Rape Crisis Center for Sacramento County, we are the only local organization that can employ paid and volunteer Sexual Assault Counselors as defined by California Evidence Code Section 1035 & 1036 and California Penal Code Sections 13837 & 13838. The evidence code details the specific requirements for an individual to be recognized as a Sexual Assault Counselor. These include completing a 40-hour training program in the counseling of sexual assault victims which must be conducted by a state funded Rape Crisis Center and working under and being supervised by the Rape Crisis Center. The Penal Code defines which organizations qualify as Rape Crisis Centers and the mandatory services they must provide. The status of a Sexual Assault Counselor working for a recognized Rape Crisis Center is required to invoke confidentiality privilege for protected communications between a sexual assault victim and the counselor. WEAVE's status as Sacramento County's Rape Crisis Center affords this protection of privileged communication to any survivor of sexual violence receiving services from a WEAVE employee or volunteer.

We modeled the partnership with the Senate after WEAVE's successful collaboration with the Los Rios Community College District through which WEAVE provides an embedded Confidential Advocate for students on each of the four campuses to serve as a resource for reporting, support, and information.

For our partnership with the Senate, we have chosen a WEAVE employee who is a sexual assault counselor with specialized training and experience in the fields of sexual assault and domestic violence including working as a counselor, educator, and advocate. The staff member brings the experience, commitment and compassion that Senate employees deserve.

This collaboration is an important first step to creating a safe and respectful workplace for all Capitol staffers. I believe our collective efforts to be unprecedented and will offer a model of response replicable in any workplace in California and within any state in the nation. Californians can take pride in the commitment to creating equity and safety in the workplace demonstrated here today. Thank you.