
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Senator Nancy Skinner, Chair
2019 - 2020 Regular

Bill No: AB 1603 **Hearing Date:** June 25, 2019
Author: Wicks
Version: March 19, 2019
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: SC

Subject: *California Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant Program*

HISTORY

Source: Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence

Prior Legislation: SB 934 (Allen), held in Senate Approps., 2018
AB 97 (Ting), Ch. 14, Stats. 2017

Support: Advance Peace; Alliance for Boys and Men of Color; Bay Area Student Activists; Brady California United Against Gun Violence; California Partnership for Safe Communities; California Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism; Children's Defense Fund – California; Cities United; City and County of San Francisco Board of Supervisors; City of Stockton; Community Justice Action Fund; Cure Violence; Ella Baker Center for Human Rights; Everychild Foundation; Everytown for Gun Safety; Faith in Action; Healing Dialogue and Action; Health Officers Association of California; Legacy LA; MILPA; Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America; National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, Los Angeles; National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform; Pacific Juvenile Defender Center; Public Health Advocates; San Joaquin General Hospital; Toberman Neighborhood Center; Urban Peace Institute; Youth ALIVE!

Opposition: None known

Assembly Floor Vote: 78 - 0

PURPOSE

The purpose of this bill is to codify the establishment of the California Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant Program (CalVIP) and the authority and duties of the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) in administering the program.

Previous State Budget Acts from 2007 to 2017 appropriated \$9.2 million annually from the State Restitution Fund to the California Gang Reduction, Intervention, and Prevention (CalGRIP) program for initiatives to reduce youth and gang-related crime.

Previous State Budget Act of 2017 renamed CalGRIP to Cal VIP and appropriated \$9.2 million to the program, with \$1 million specifically earmarked for the City of Los Angeles and the remaining amount to be distributed by BSCC for competitive grants.

This bill codifies the establishment of Cal VIP, to be administered by BSCC.

This bill states that the purpose of CalVIP is to improve public health and safety by supporting effective violence reduction initiatives in communities that are disproportionately impacted by violence, particularly group-member involved homicides, shootings, and aggravated assaults.

This bill requires CalVIP grants to be used to support, expand, and replicate evidence-based violence reduction initiatives, including, without limitation, hospital-based violence intervention programs, evidence-based street outreach programs, and focused deterrence strategies, that seek to interrupt cycles of violence and retaliation in order to reduce the incidence of homicides, shootings, and aggravated assaults. These initiatives shall be primarily focused on providing violence intervention services to the small segment of the population that is identified as having the highest risk of perpetrating or being victimized by violence in the near future.

This bill requires CalVIP grants to be made on a competitive basis to cities that are disproportionately impacted by violence, and to community-based organizations that serve the residents of those cities.

This bill provides that for purposes of this bill, a city is disproportionately impacted by violence if any of the following are true:

- The city experienced 20 or more homicides per calendar year during two or more of the three calendar years immediately preceding the grant application;
- The city experienced 10 or more homicides per calendar year and had a homicide rate that was at least 50 percent higher than the statewide homicide rate during two or more of the three calendar years immediately preceding the grant application; or,
- An applicant otherwise demonstrates a unique and compelling need for additional resources to address the impact of homicides, shootings, and aggravated assaults in the applicant's community.

This bill requires an applicant for a CalVIP grant to submit a proposal, in a form prescribed by the board, which shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

- Clearly defined and measurable objectives for the grant;
- A statement describing how the applicant proposes to use the grant to implement an evidence-based violence reduction initiative in accordance with the provisions of this bill;
- A statement describing how the applicant proposes to use the grant will to enhance coordination of existing violence prevention and intervention programs and minimize duplication of services; and,
- Evidence indicating that the proposed violence reduction initiative would likely reduce the incidence of homicides, shootings, and aggravated assaults.

This bill provides that in awarding CalVIP grants, the board shall give preference to applicants whose grant proposals demonstrate the greatest likelihood of reducing the incidence of

homicides, shootings, and aggravated assaults in the applicant's community, without contributing to mass incarceration.

This bill states that the amount of funds awarded to an applicant shall be commensurate with the scope of the applicant's proposal and the applicant's demonstrated need for additional resources to address violence in the applicant's community.

This bill requires each grantee to commit a cash or in-kind contribution equivalent to the amount of the grant awarded, but authorizes BSCC to waive this requirement for good cause.

This bill requires each city that receives a CalVIP grant to distribute no less than 50% of the grant funds to one or more of any of the following types of entities:

- Community-based organizations; and,
- Public agencies or departments, other than law enforcement agencies or departments that are primarily dedicated to community safety or violence prevention.

This bill states that BSCC shall form a grant selection advisory committee including, without limitation, persons who have been impacted by violence, formerly incarcerated persons, and persons with direct experience in implementing evidence-based violence reduction initiatives, including initiatives that incorporate public health and community-based approaches.

This bill authorizes BSCC to use up to 5% of the funds appropriated for Cal VIP each year for the costs of administering the program including, without limitation, the employment of personnel, providing technical assistance to grantees, and evaluation of violence reduction initiatives supported by CalVIP.

This bill requires each grantee to report to BSCC, in a form and at intervals prescribed by BSCC, their progress in achieving the grant objectives.

This bill states that BSCC shall, no later than April 1, 2024, and every third year hereafter, prepare and submit a report to the Legislature regarding the impact of the violence prevention initiatives supported by CalVIP.

This bill requires BSCC to make evaluations of the grant program available to the public.

This bill states that this act shall be known as the Break the Cycle of Violence Act.

COMMENTS

1. Need for This Bill

According to the author of this bill:

California's local communities suffer from the tragic effects of gun violence. Every year, gun violence cuts short thousands of lives, depress the quality of life of whole neighborhoods, and makes it harder for schools, businesses, and

community institutions to thrive while also furthering economic and racial inequities.

There are a number of local violence intervention and prevention programs that have helped reduce gun violence in California's hardest hit communities. Cities like Oakland, Los Angeles, Richmond and Stockton have, with the support of state funding, established evidence-based programs – like violence interruption, focused deterrence and/or hospital-based violence intervention programs – and have experienced impressive reductions in their homicides rates. Many cities are looking to their successes as a model to launch their comprehensive violence reduction efforts.

From 2007 to 2017, California's Budget Acts appropriated \$9.215 million per year from the State Penalty Fund to fund the California Gang Reduction, Intervention, and Prevention (CalGRIP) grant program, which provided matching grants to cities for programs to reduce youth and gang-related crime.

This program faced challenges due to declining revenues in the State Penalty Fund, but was reauthorized for one year with \$9.5 million from the General Fund, alongside the adoption of various reforms. These reforms:

- Renamed the CalGRIP program as CalVIP to reflect a more targeted focus on evidence-based violence prevention strategies as opposed to anti-gang-affiliation and general community service activities;
- Prioritized localities with the highest rates of violence and the greatest demonstrated need;
- Authorized community-based organizations to apply directly for CalVIP grants and increased the portion of grant awards that must be distributed to them; and
- Strengthened grantees' data reporting requirements.

A recent independent evaluation of Oakland's Ceasefire initiative cost roughly \$250,000 per year for two years. A \$2 million per year appropriation for at least two years would allow the UC Firearm Violence Research Center to conduct similar high-quality evaluations of roughly eight CalVIP-funded programs, helping to build the research base for violence prevention work and to establish best practices for CalVIP grantees. This amount is also consistent with many grant programs' standard practice of reserving 5% of grant funds for programmatic evaluation.

Unfortunately, multiple Californian cities continue to grapple with alarming recent increases in bloodshed and violence, including Fresno, Sacramento, Salinas, San Bernardino, and Stockton. Many small rural communities have also been experiencing dramatic spikes in violent crimes.

The cost of innovative, effective violence intervention programs is minor when compared to the enormous costs associated with gun violence in our state. Based on expenses the state can directly measure, the direct and indirect cost of gun violence in California is approximately \$18.3 billion per year. This staggering

price tag fails to justly capture violence's enormous personal and moral toll; the lives lost; generational, cyclical trauma; communities torn apart. The toll falls disproportionately on communities of color: in 2016, Latinos were nearly three times more likely to be shot to death than their white neighbors; African-Americans were twelve times more likely.

AB 1603 will secure the future of CalVIP by incorporating it into statute permanently. The intent of this bill is to ensure grant funding is effectively supporting communities and people at highest risk of serious interpersonal violence.

2. Background on CalVIP

From 2007 to 2017, California's budget acts appropriated \$9.215 million per year to operate the California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention (CalGRIP) program, which provided matching grants to cities for initiatives to reduce youth-and gang-related crime. The budget acts between 2007 and 2017 guaranteed \$1 million annually for the City of Los Angeles, with the remainder distributed to other cities of all sizes through a competitive application process, overseen by BSCC. In the 2017 Budget Act, the CalGRIP program, which was restructured to CalVIP, shifted the program away from initiatives targeting gang crime and affiliation toward a narrower and more objective focus on evidence-based violence prevention programs.

CalVIP funds may be used for violence intervention and prevention activities, with preference given to applicants who (1) are from areas that are disproportionately affected by violence and (2) propose to fund activities that have been found to be effective in reducing violence. The maximum grant provided is \$500,000, and at least two will be awarded to cities with populations less than 200,000 people. At least 20% of funds a city receives must go to community-based organizations. Cities must match 100% of the grant money received. The 2018 State Budget Act appropriated \$9 million for this program. In addition to the \$1 million set-aside for the City of Los Angeles, eight cities and seven community-based organizations were funded for a two-year grant period beginning September 1, 2018 and ending August 31, 2020. BSCC will produce a Legislative Report on this program in March 2020. (http://bscc.ca.gov/s_cpgpcalvipgrant/)

This bill would codify the CalVIP grant program established in the 2017-2018 budget and codify the guidelines for the application and approval of grants.

3. Argument in Support

Everytown for Gun Safety writes in support of this bill:

Importantly, the bill gives preference to applicants who employ strategies proven to reduce violence without contributing to mass incarceration. Evidence from across the country has demonstrated that programs like Cure Violence, Group Violence Intervention and Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs, to name a few, reduce shootings and gun homicide. These programs also help to increase long-term outcomes for individuals receiving the interventions, such as securing employment. Examples within the state also speak to these programs' efficacy. Los Angeles has seen a 34% reduction in homicides since launching their Gang Reduction Youth Development Program in 2007. Oakland has experienced a 43% drop in homicides and a 49% reduction in non-fatal injury shootings since launching Oakland Ceasefire in 2012. After the adoptions of

Operation Peacemaker and other violence prevention strategies in 2010, Richmond's homicides fell 56% in the following five years. These cities provide a model for the evidence-based programming CalVIP can support.

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