

ACE Legislation

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Problem

California, like the rest of the nation, faces a crisis in the long-term decline of cultural, social and civic institutions, fracturing the bonds that hold us together as a civil society. Attempts to reverse this trend, including government intervention, have only worsened the problem and fault lines are breaking in almost every civic institution. Today, our civil society can no longer be counted on to produce a free and responsible society.

Cause

Of the five main social institutions, political, educational, economic, family and religion, only family serves as a child's first exposure to society. Families are the foundational unit of society, often referred to as society's building blocks because they serve as a nursery for the citizens that populate a society. Lessons and skills developed within the family will be used in the larger community. Unfortunately, the bond between children and their biological parents has degraded continuously over the last 50 years.

In 1996, a landmark study conducted Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shows that [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#), such as neglect, abuse and household dysfunction, can impede and delay social development. Unless ACEs are addressed and carefully remediated, their impacts early in life can lead to social/behavioral issues, including poor social development, unhealthy coping behaviors, engagement in risky behaviors or violence into and throughout adulthood. Parents with ACEs increase the risk that their children will also have ACEs, facilitating the breakdown of families and the downward spiral of our culture.

Solution

A state law requiring law enforcement, education and health providers to coordinate with citizen advisory groups and produce community plans to reduce ACEs will strengthen families. In time, key negative social indicators such as crime,

homelessness, suicides, incarceration rates, declining education, mass murder, abortion and gender confusion will diminish, and civil society will be restored.

Points pertaining to legislation

1. Declare ACEs a statewide Public Health Emergency.
2. Make the social impacts of ACEs common knowledge in the general population.
3. Require county and city law enforcement, education and health care officials facilitate, with local business, religious and humanitarian organizations (Citizen Advisory Groups) to produce, within three years, communitywide action plans to reduce or eliminate ACEs.
4. Direct State Departments (i.e., Corrections, Public Health, Education, Justice, Law Enforcement, Veteran Affairs) to integrate ACEs and develop action plans in conjunction with county and city governments.
5. Identify, endorse and /or mandate ACE resiliency programs that produce self-efficacy, not dependency in children and adults at every opportunity.
6. Establish a baseline set of key social indicators (such as crime, incarceration, school attendance, academic excellence, murder, homelessness, divorce, unwed pregnancy, fatherlessness and suicide) to track social reform.
7. Direct Governor to establish target rates for the identified social indicators and report annually on the status of social indicators and ACE reduction.
8. Provide funding from existing social programs, law enforcement or education where the State Auditor, Legislative Analyst's Office, legislative budget committees and other oversight organizations where programmatic effectiveness has been challenged.
9. Block grant state funds to humanitarian private organizations if social reform targets are not met within a date certain.