



The Valley's Voice for Choice
National Organization for Women
San Fernando Valley/ Northeast Los Angeles Chapter
P.O. Box 7141 Van Nuys CA 91409-7141 (818) 769-2035 info@sfnnow.org

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FOR INFORMATION: Jan B. Tucker (SFV/NELA NOW) Alison Arngrim (PROTECT)

NOW CHAPTER JOINS SUPPORTERS OF SB 33 TO END CHILD MOLESTERS' LOOPHOLE

The San Fernando Valley/Northeast Los Angeles Chapter of the National Organization for Women (SFV/NELA NOW) has voted "unqualified support" for the passage of SB 33, introduced by Senator James Battin (R-Riverside County) which is designed to close a legal loophole that enables child molesters to escape punishment.

Linda Pruett, Co-President of SFV/NELA NOW, said that "not only is our chapter adamantly in favor of this bill, we are compelled to question the refusal of California NOW to support it and look forward to the leadership of that organization publicly explaining its position." According to Pruett, California NOW had demanded an amendment which would obviously kill the bill's chances for passage.

SB 33, sponsored by PROTECT – the National Association to Protect Children -- would eliminate the differential treatment from current law in which those who commit incest by molesting their own children are eligible for probation while people who molest other people's children get mandatory prison sentences. PROTECT charges that since 1981 when the current law was re-written, not less than 50,000 children saw their abusers stay out of prison as a result, in spite of the fact that most children are in fact abused by family members or other people in their immediate familial circle.

Jan Tucker, Co-President of the chapter and a California licensed private investigator said that "as civil libertarians our chapter's leadership also supports this bill because it will have the collateral effect of making it more difficult for unscrupulous defense attorneys to convince clients to plead no-contest or guilty when they were in fact innocent. There are some rotten apples in the barrel amongst defense attorneys who would rather pocket a hefty retainer than spend money to properly investigate a case and mount a defense. By eliminating the possibility of a no jail sentence, it will make it a lot more difficult for them to con their clients into foregoing a chance to prove their innocence."