Assembly Bill 418 would remove the sunset date of an existing state law that allows a survivor of domestic violence to terminate a residential lease in order to move to safer housing. This bill would also decrease the survivor’s remaining rent obligation from 30 days to 14 days.

This provision will sunset on January 1, 2016. After that date, if the sunset is not removed, a survivor could only terminate a lease early by going to court and obtaining a restraining order or by filing a police report.

Many survivors often cannot take either of those actions. In 2005, the California Attorney General’s Task Force on Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence reported that there were significant burdens placed on victims seeking family court restraining orders. Furthermore, immigrant survivors are often reluctant to contact the authorities due to their cultural aversion to involving outsiders in family matters or prior negative experiences with the police and the justice systems in their native countries. Additionally, limited English proficient individuals continue to face language barriers when interacting with the court system. Removing the sunset would ensure that survivors continue to have access to lease terminations without having to turn to the courts or the police.

Even with the streamlined procedure that AB 418 would make permanent, there are barriers to early termination because the survivor must still pay for 30 days of additional rent after he or she leaves. This time period deprives survivors of funds they desperately need to secure new rental housing.

Reducing additional rent obligations will help more survivors find replacement housing – something that is crucial to combatting the homelessness survivors often experience. Over 80 percent of domestic violence survivors entering shelters identified “finding housing I can afford” as a need, second only to “safety for myself” (85 percent).
SUPPORTERS

- Alliance for Community Transformations
- American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
- AFSCME
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice
- California Apartment Association
- California Catholic Conference of Bishops
- California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA)
- California Communities United Institute
- California Women's Law Center
- Casa De Esperanza
- Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse (CORA)
- Fair Housing Napa Valley
- Housing Commissioner of Los Angeles
- Housing Equality Law Project
- Interface Children and Family Services
- Laura's House
- Law Foundation of Silicon Valley
- Monarch Services
- National Council of Jewish Women CA
- Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence
- Peace Over Violence
- Rainbow Services
- Safe Alternatives to Violent Environments
- SF Domestic Violence Consortium
- Shepherd's Door Domestic Violence Resource Center
- Strong Hearted Native Women's Coalition
- Tenants Together
- WomanHaven, Inc; Center for Family Solutions
- Wild Iris Family Counseling and Crisis Center
- YWCA of Glendale