

AAUW, Lompoc-Vandenberg Branch
P.O. Box 2523
Lompoc, CA 93438

July 16, 2013

Subject: Funding of Victims' Advocate Position at the Lompoc Police Department

Dear Lompoc City Council members:

The membership of the Lompoc Vandenberg Branch of the American Association of University Women supports the funding for the dedicated full time position of Victims' Advocate.

In the job description for the victim advocate, it lists the following responsibilities:

- Performs counseling, advocacy and training services to include:
- Counsels and advises victims
- Assists obtaining emergency sheltering of victims and children
- Assists with obtaining protection orders and victim compensation
- Transports to shelter, medical facility, court and other services
- Assists with court appearances
- Provides training to police on domestic violence issues
- Provides education to the community
- Supervises part time staff and volunteers
- Participates in Task Force committees

This demanding position calls for a full time professional.

Several years ago, one of our members, a woman in her 80s, was the victim of a serious assault. This attack left a strong educated woman feeling vulnerable and was a life altering traumatic experience. If our member was so negatively affected, just imagine how those without means, education, or support would feel.

In the discussion provided by staff, it states that the grant under the national Violence against Women Act was denied. Our organization advocated for and hailed the re-authorization of the Violence Against Women Act in March of this year and a search of the website shows the expanded categories available for these VAWA grants. AAUW has as its priority issue support of the VAWA legislation and our organization was represented when President Obama signed the expanded VAWA into law. We urge staff to re-apply for that grant and our organization would support any such effort.

Lompoc Vandenberg Branch, AAUW, with its 95 Lompoc area members, agrees with the staff conclusion: Funding this position would allow the Lompoc Police Dept to provide enhanced services to victims of crime in our community. Your number one priority is public safety. Surely, this position supports that priority, especially for the most vulnerable in our community.

Respectfully,



Dianne Owens, President