

**November 15, 2012**

**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Ben Tulchin and Corey O'Neil, Tulchin Research

**Re: Groundbreaking New Poll Finds Adults Across California and In San Diego Believe Domestic Violence Can Happen to Anyone; Educating Youth on Domestic Violence is Key to Preventing and Reducing it**

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Tulchin Research recently conducted a groundbreaking statewide survey among adults in California to better understand public opinion toward domestic violence. The survey included a statistically significant number of interviews in San Diego County which enables us to analyze opinions of adults statewide as well as in San Diego County specifically. Conducted during Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October), this survey is the first of its kind in the state to measure public attitudes toward and awareness of domestic violence in an in-depth manner.

The survey finds that an overwhelming number of adults in the state, and in San Diego County, believe domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of specific demographic characteristics and including people like the respondents themselves. Furthermore, Californians and San Diegans express particular concern about the impact of domestic violence on children and believe one of the most effective means to prevent and reduce this social problem is to educate young people about it. We provide below a summary of key findings followed by a more in-depth analysis of the survey.

- A nearly unanimous number of adults in California (98 percent) and in San Diego County (96 percent) believe domestic violence can happen to anyone.
- Bringing it closer to home, an overwhelming majority (70 percent) of adults in the state believe “domestic violence can affect people like me,” with similar numbers of adults in San Diego County holding this same belief (67 percent).
  - This finding is nearly a perfect match to the percentage of the adult population with a friend or family member who has been a victim of domestic violence (66 percent in California, 61 percent in San Diego).
- With relevance to San Diego County, the survey found that 89 percent of adults statewide and 81 percent in San Diego County believe the risk of domestic violence is higher among military families due to the added trauma and stress the experience.
- More than nine out of ten adults (97 percent in California, 98 percent in San Diego) believe children who are exposed to domestic violence are more likely to have mental health and anger management problems.
- Adults in San Diego County (91 percent) and statewide (95 percent) also agree that educating young people so they have the skills to support safe and healthy relationships when they grow up is an effective way to reduce domestic violence.

- Furthermore, an overwhelming number of adults (89 percent statewide, 84 percent in San Diego County) think it is appropriate to teach high school students about relationship violence or dating abuse, while 82 percent in the state and 72 percent in San Diego County say the same about middle school students.
- Despite this high level of concern about domestic violence, less than a quarter of Californians (23 percent) know October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. However, a significantly higher percentage of adults in San Diego (31 percent) know October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

We highlight the key findings from the survey below.

**Perceptions of Domestic Violence**

There are an overwhelming and nearly unanimous number of adults in California (98 percent) and San Diego (96 percent) who believe domestic violence can happen to anyone, regardless of gender, age, race or income level. This includes a majority (54 percent statewide, 53 percent in San Diego) who find this assertion *extremely believable* and a third of adults (33 percent statewide, 32 percent in San Diego) who say it is *very believable*.

**Domestic Violence Beliefs: Can happen to anyone?**

*Now I am going to read you some statements about domestic violence. Please tell me how believable you find each statement - extremely believable, very believable, somewhat believable, or not at all believable.*

<i>Domestic violence can happen to anyone - men or women, young or old, any race, and any income level.</i>	<u>Statewide</u>	<u>San Diego</u>
<b>Total believable</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>96%</b>
Extremely believable	54%	53%
Very believable	33%	32%
Somewhat believable	11%	11%
Not at all believable	1%	4%
Don't Know	0%	0%

Similarly, it is nearly unanimous (97 percent statewide, 96 percent in San Diego) that adults believe children who are exposed to domestic violence are more likely to have mental health and anger management problems, including close to a majority (49 percent) both statewide and in San Diego who say that is *extremely believable* and a third of adults statewide (33 percent) and a quarter in San Diego (26 percent) who say it is *very believable*.

**Domestic Violence Beliefs: Mental effects on children?**

*Now I am going to read you some statements about domestic violence. Please tell me how believable you find each statement - extremely believable, very believable, somewhat believable, or not at all believable.*

<i>Children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to have mental health and anger management problems.</i>	<u>Statewide</u>	<u>San Diego</u>
<b>Total believable</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>96%</b>
Extremely believable	49%	49%
Very believable	33%	26%
Somewhat believable	16%	23%
Not at all believable	2%	2%
Don't Know	1%	0%

Digging a little deeper, we asked respondents a more direct question about who is affected by domestic violence. **An overwhelming majority of adults statewide (70 percent) say domestic violence “can affect people like me and people I know well.”** Conversely, just a quarter of adults (26 percent) say domestic violence “doesn’t affect people like me and people I know well.”

A similarly significant number of adults in San Diego County (67 percent) acknowledge that domestic violence can affect them while 31 percent believe domestic violence has no effect on them personally. The table below compares these findings at the state and local levels.

**Domestic Violence: Who is affected?**

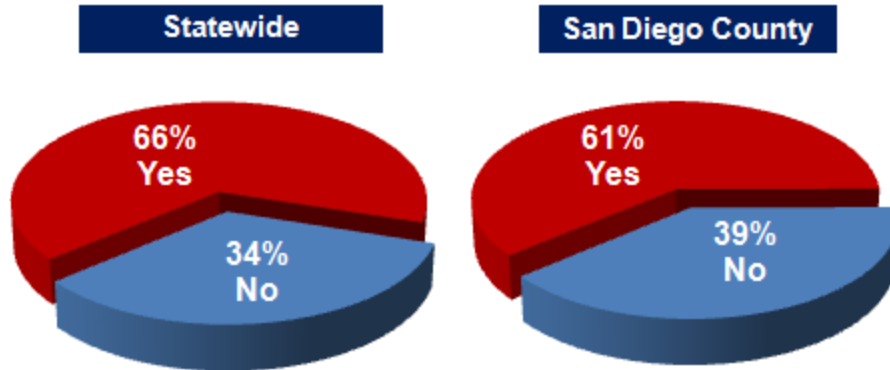
*In thinking about domestic violence, would you say it is an issue that typically...*

	<u>Statewide</u>	<u>San Diego</u>
<b>Can affect people like me and people I know well</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>67%</b>
Probably doesn’t affect people like me and people I know well	26%	31%
Undecided	3%	2%
<b>People like me - NOT people like me</b>	<b>+44</b>	<b>+36</b>

Additionally, two-thirds of adults in California (66 percent) and 61 percent in San Diego County have a friend or family member who has been a victim of domestic violence. This level of reporting also holds true among solid majorities of demographic subgroups, including specific gender, age, ethnicity and regional respondents who report having a personal connection with domestic violence.

### Domestic Violence – Affects Family and Friends

*As far as you know, have any of the following ever been a victim of domestic violence in their lifetime?*



With relevance to San Diego, 81 percent of adults countywide believe the risk of domestic violence is higher among military families due to the added trauma and stress they experience. This belief includes 17 percent of adults who think it is *extremely believable* and 19 percent who think it is *very believable*. To add context, this belief is somewhat higher among adults statewide (89 percent), with 19 percent of adults in the state who think it is *extremely believable* that domestic violence is a higher risk among military families and 31 percent who think it is very believable.

### Domestic Violence Solutions and Prevention

In an effort to understand what the public believes are the best ways to go about dealing with domestic violence, we asked respondents to weigh in on what they think are the most effective solutions to reducing this social problem.

**An overwhelming and nearly unanimous number of adults in the state (95 percent) think “educating young people so they have the skills to support safe and healthy relationships when they grow up” is an effective solution.** This includes three quarters of adults (75 percent) who say this is a *very effective* solution and another 21 percent who say it’s a *somewhat effective* solution. Adults in San Diego also show strong support for educating young people about healthy relationships (91 percent total effective).

Other popular solutions include, “raising public awareness of domestic violence and speaking out against violence when we see it” (93 percent statewide, 88 percent in San Diego) as well as “ensuring that communities have the funding needed to support domestic violence shelters so people have a safe place to go” (93 percent statewide, 87 percent in San Diego).

**Effective Domestic Violence Solutions: Total Effective**

*Now I am going to read you some proposed solutions for reducing domestic violence. Please tell me how effective you think each solution would be in reducing domestic violence – very effective, somewhat effective, not too effective, or not at all effective.*

	<u>Statewide</u>	<u>San Diego</u>
<b><i>Educating young people so they have the skills to support safe and healthy relationships when they grow up.</i></b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>91%</b>
<b><i>Raising public awareness of domestic violence and speaking out against violence when we see it.</i></b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>88%</b>
<b><i>Ensuring that communities have the funding needed to support domestic violence shelters so people have a safe place to go if they are threatened by abuse.</i></b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>87%</b>

Furthermore, adults in the state overwhelmingly believe we should educate our kids in high school (89 percent) and middle school (82 percent) about healthy relationships in order to raise awareness about relationship violence or dating abuse as a way to prevent domestic violence in the future. This same belief is true in San Diego as adults there also carry strong feelings about educating students about healthy relationships (84 percent high school, 72 percent middle school).

Conversely, just eight percent of adults statewide think teaching high school students about relationship violence and dating abuse should wait until they turn 18 while just slightly more (14 percent) said teaching middle school students about relationship violence and dating abuse should wait until they turn 18.

**Student Education Preference**

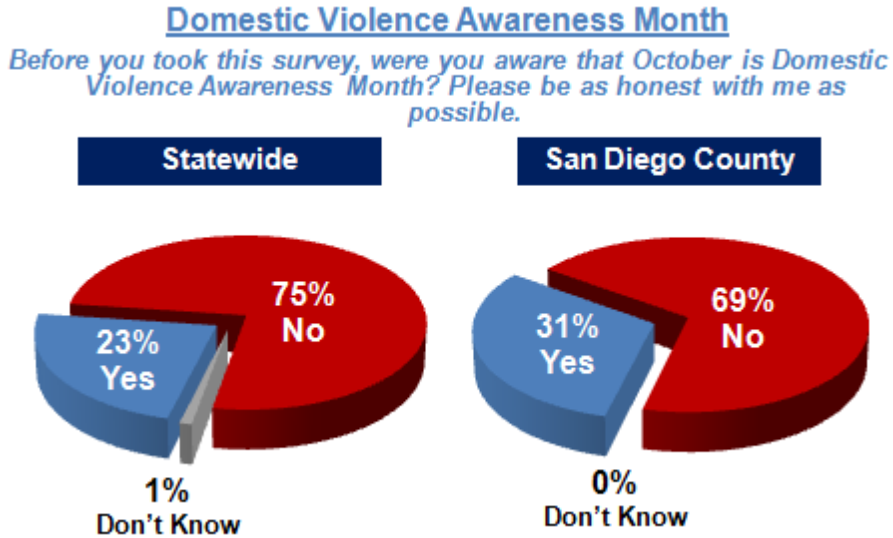
*Some people have proposed teaching students in (high school/middle school) about healthy relationships to raise awareness of the issue of relationship violence or dating abuse to try to prevent it in the future. Do you think it is appropriate to teach (high school/middle school) students about domestic violence, or do you feel they are too young for this subject and that we should not expose them to it until they are at least 18?*

	<u>Statewide</u>		<u>San Diego</u>	
	<b>High School</b>	<b>Middle School</b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Middle School</b>
<b><i>Appropriate to teach students</i></b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>72%</b>
<i>Wait until at least 18</i>	8%	14%	13%	19%
<i>Depends</i>	1%	2%	0%	4%
<i>Don't know</i>	2%	3%	3%	6%
<b><i>Teach students - Wait until 18</i></b>	<b>+81</b>	<b>+68</b>	<b>+71</b>	<b>+53</b>

**Domestic Violence Awareness**

In an effort to better assess the extent to which domestic violence has impacted the lives of Californians and San Diego residents, we asked respondents to weigh in on their personal history with domestic violence. Specifically, two out of three adults statewide (66 percent) and 61 percent in San Diego County report having been personally affected by domestic violence as they know either a friend or family member who has been a victim.

Despite that high level of personal connection with domestic violence, fewer than one out of four adults in the state (23 percent) are aware that October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. However, adults in San Diego have a slightly higher awareness (31 percent) of the month's significance. Conversely, three quarters statewide (75 percent) and 69 percent in San Diego admit they were not aware October marked that occasion, while the remainder were unsure.



**Survey Methodology:** From October 24 – 28, 2012, Tulchin Research conducted a random-digital telephone survey among 900 adults in California at least 18 years of age or older using live, professional interviewers and conducting surveys in both English and Spanish and calling both landlines and cell phones. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.27 percentage points statewide and +/-10.9 percentage points in San Diego County.