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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 6, 2016**

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### **District Attorney's Office Awarded Grant for Victim Witness Advocates Program**

District Attorney Jeffrey S. Rosell announced today that the Victim Witness Assistance Program of the District Attorney's Office has been awarded a grant by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. The funding will come from the Unserved / Underserved Victim Advocacy and Outreach Program. The DA's Office will use the grant funds in several areas. Two fulltime Victim Advocates will be added to serve crime victims who are monolingual Spanish speakers. The grant will fund outreach efforts in the community. Finally, the grant will allow the addition of a "comfort dog" to the Victim Witness team. The dog will be specially trained to provide emotional support to victims of crime throughout the criminal justice process. Comfort dogs are commonly used across the nation. Studies have shown that the animals reduce stress on victims during interviews, testimony, and the court process in general.

Sylvia Nieto, Program Manager of the Victim Witness Assistance Program, said, "We are appreciative of the financial support of Cal OES in our work with monolingual Spanish speakers who are victims of crime. Additionally, we are looking forward to the addition of a comfort dog to our team. With this, we will join the ranks of over 35 Victim Witness Centers across the state that provide this service. The dog will provide support to victims involved in the criminal justice process. We look forward to reporting our progress on this project."