

National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women --- Co-chaired by:

Web site: www.immigrantwomennetwork.org

Immigrant Women Program, Legal Momentum

1101 L Street, N.W. Suite 300
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 326-0040
iwp@legalmomentum.org

Family Violence Prevention Fund

383 Rhode Island St., Suite 304
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 252-8900
leni@endabuse.org

Advanced Special Immigration for Survivors Technical Assistance (ASISTA)

515 28th St.
Des Moines, Iowa 50312
www.asistaonline.org

Oppose the Coleman-Domenici Amendment to S. 1639, because it will deny immigrant victims of domestic violence and sexual assault any help from law enforcement.

Please vote against the Coleman-Bond Amendment so that victims of domestic violence and sexual assault will continue to have the protections you provided in VAWA 2005.

Dear Senator,

This Senate will soon take up the Coleman-Domenici Amendment, which will deny immigrant victims of domestic violence and sexual assault the ability to safely report to law enforcement about crimes committed against them. Immigrant victims need to be able report crimes without risking deportation or rights created for them by Congress under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). As a result of this amendment, victims will be trapped in abusive relationships and sexual assault predators will remain unpunished and free to abuse again. Here is an example of what will happen in all our communities if this amendment is not defeated.

Lucia's Story

Lucia had suffered numerous beatings perpetrated by her husband. These beatings were so severe that her neighbors heard the actual abuse, saw bruises a number of times, and heard her screams of pain. Her husband never filed immigration papers for her, although he was a U.S. citizen who clearly could. Lucia's husband threatened her repeatedly, telling her that "If you call for help, the police will turn you in to immigration officials and deport you; you will never see your children again." He used her immigration status and fear of being torn from her children to control her and force her to live in his world of violence.

We hear these threats in the cases of immigrant victims of domestic violence from across the country. In fact, research has found that such forms of immigration related abuse almost always co-exist with physical and sexual abuse in a relationship.¹

¹ Giselle Aguilar Hass et al., *Lifetime Prevalence of Violence Against Latina Immigrants: Legal and Policy Implications*, in DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES 103, 106-109 (2000).

Lucia's husband's threats to have her deported and ensure that she would not see her children kept Lucia from calling the police or seeking any form of help. She did not go to the hospital, no matter how severe her injuries. Eventually, Lucia's neighbor, who was also an immigrant, took her to a local agency that worked with immigrant victims of domestic violence so that she could get some help. Lucia's fear of being turned over to immigration officials was so great that she put up with the beatings because she believed she was trapped and had no other options.

We Need Your Vote Against This Amendment

The Coleman-Domenici Amendment discourages victims from going to the police for help. It jeopardizes the lives of immigrant women and children, and as important, turns the attention of state and local law enforcement away from crime prevention and instead to preying on immigrant victims of abuse.

The National Network To End Violence Against Immigrant Women representing over 3,000 agencies that work with immigrant victims urges you to:

VOTE NO ON Coleman-Domenici.

Thank you,

The National Network To End Violence Against Immigrant Women

Legal Momentum

Family Violence Prevention Fund

ASISTA

For further questions please call or e-mail Alicia Carra, Staff Attorney, IWP Legal Momentum, 202-326-0040, or Leslye E. Orloff, Director, Immigrant Women Program, Legal Momentum 202-210-8886.