

PRESIDENT SIGNS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

On January 6, 2006 the President signed the Violence Against Women Act into law. [CLICK HERE](#) to see photos of the bill signing. NCADV would like to thank everyone who worked so hard over the last months to make this reauthorization possible.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read a section by section summary of the bill

To read the entire text of H.R. 3402 [CLICK HERE](#)

BOTH SENATE AND HOUSE PASS VERSIONS OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

On October 4th, the Senate passed VAWA S. 1197 by unanimous consent. On September 28th, the House passed H.R. 3402, a Department of Justice Reauthorization bill that incorporates several VAWA provisions by a vote of 415- 4.

Thanks to everyone for all their hard work and effort that made this reauthorization possible.

The bills will now be conferenced together where the differences between the bills will be discussed and one final bill will be produced to be voted on by both houses. Look for information on the coming conference process and how we still need your help in order to assure VAWA has the strongest provisions and programs possible.

Click on the links below to jump to that section

[Congressional Action](#)

[VAWA Reauthorization Action Items](#)

[Stay Informed](#)

[Important Congressional Committees](#)

[VAWA Talking Points](#)

[Sample Letter to Congress Supporting VAWA](#)

Originally passed in 1994, VAWA revolutionized the way society addressed domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. During the past decade, VAWA has provided tremendous resources and protections for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

VAWA programs have provided increased training for police, prosecutors, and court officials, and greatly improved the response of the criminal justice system to victims of violence. Congress has a unique opportunity not only to continue successful and crucial existing programs, but also to expand on ten years of progress

to further the safety and stability of the lives of survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

NCADV is a part of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women. The National Task Force was instrumental in the drafting and passage of both the original VAWA in 1994 and the reauthorization in 2000. For more information on the Task Force members and VAWA please visit the Task Force website at www.vawa2005.org.

Over the last several months the National Task Force has assisted Congress in drafting this year's VAWA reauthorization bill. NCADV and members of other local and national groups have proactively met with Members of Congress and Congressional staffers to discuss the need for VAWA reauthorization. However, we need the support of each community to ensure that this life-saving legislation is enacted.

Congressional Action on VAWA 2005

Click on the links below to be directed to legislative text, bill status and list of Co-sponsors.

Senate Bill S. 1197

- [Introduced by Senator Biden \(D-DE\), Sen. Specter \(R-PA\) and Sen. Hatch \(R-UT\).](#)
- [Click here for Press Release](#)
- [Click here for bill text](#)
- [Click here for bill summary, status and co-sponsors](#)
- [Click here to see NCADV's written testimony presented to the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on July 19, 2005](#)

House of Representatives Bill *HR 2876*

- [Introduced by Rep. Mark Green \(R-WI\) and Rep. John Conyers, Jr. \(D-MI\).](#)
- [Click here for National Task Force Press Release on House Bill](#)
- [Click here for bill text](#)
- [Click here for bill summary, status and co-sponsors](#)

House of Representatives Bill *HR3402 (DOJ and VAWA Reauthorization)*

- [Click here for bill text](#)

- [Click here for bill summary, status and co-sponsors](#)
- [Click here for bill amendments and votes](#)

Other Important VAWA-related bills

Immigrant Victims of Violence Protection Act of 2005 *HR 3188*

- *Introduced by* Rep. [Jan Schakowsky \(D-IL\)](#) and 77 original co-sponsors
- [Click here for Rep. Schakowsky's press release](#)
- [Click here for bill text](#)
- [Click here for bill summary, status and co-sponsors](#)

Security and Financial Empowerment Act (*for victims of domestic & sexual violence*) *HR 3185*

- *Introduced by* Rep. [Lucille Roybal-Allard \(D-CA\)](#)
- [Click here for Rep. Roybal-Allard's press release](#)
- [Click here for bill text](#)
- [Click here for bill summary, status and co-sponsors](#)

Action Items

Meet with Your Legislator

One of the most effective ways to convey the importance of VAWA reauthorization is to conduct a face-to-face meeting with your Senator(s) and Representative. Scheduling a meeting in your legislator's home office is easy. Simply call your Member's district office and ask to speak to the scheduler.

When you meet with your Member or his/her staff introduce yourself and your organization (if you are representing a local program). Tell him/her about how VAWA has affected your community and how it has improved the lives of domestic violence survivors and their children. Tell specific stories and how your program provides services to survivors. Stress to the Member or staff how these needs can be addressed in VAWA. You should also provide the Member or staff with written material about your program, such as brochures, survivor testimonials, etc. You may also include Fact Sheets from the

[VAWA 2005 website](#) with these materials. Be sure to follow up with a thank you letter recapping your meeting.

To find your Member's contact information and office location, visit www.house.gov, www.senate.gov, or www.congress.org. A great time to meet with your legislators is during a Congressional recess when Members are back in their districts meeting with constituents. You may also be interested in attending public events where you Members are speaking and ask questions about his/her support for VAWA.

Upcoming Recesses:

Memorial Day Recess: May 30 – June 3

4th of July Recess: July 4 – July 8

Summer Recess: August 1 – September 2

If you live in the Washington DC metropolitan area or plan to visit, NCADV will be glad to assist you in setting up a meeting with your Member in their DC offices. Please contact us at 202-745-1211 or via email at publicpolicy@ncadv.org if you would like assistance.

Call, Write or Fax your Representative

If you cannot arrange an in-person meeting, call your legislators and urge them to support VAWA reauthorization. When you call, ask to speak to the staff member handling the Violence Against Women Act. When the staffer answers, identify yourself as a constituent and deliver a brief message on the importance of VAWA reauthorization. If you are transferred to a staffer's voicemail, simply leave the message on the voicemail. You can find Congressional phone numbers at www.house.gov, www.senate.gov, or www.congress.org or you can call the Capital Switchboard at 202-224-3121 and ask to be transferred to your legislator.

If you chose to fax or write a letter, keep the following in mind: the most effective letters are the personalized ones explaining how VAWA has impacted lives in your local community and why reauthorization is necessary. Include personal stories from survivors, relevant local newspaper clippings, or statistics from

local programs illustrating how these programs have affected the lives of citizens in your community. Also, remember to keep your letter brief and focused. NCADV has provided a sample letter for your use. [Please click here to view the sample letter.](#)

Reach out to your Community & Allies

Another effective way to support VAWA reauthorization is to reach out to your local community and educate people on VAWA and domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Organize a town hall meeting during a Congressional recess and invite your legislator, local government representatives, and community members. Invite your legislator to visit your program and hold a press conference. Be sure to talk about VAWA at local community meetings, local government proceedings and in your agency's publications and website. Have clients, survivors and allied partners write letters or have children draw pictures to send to their Members of Congress. Put up posters about VAWA at your events and in your offices. Fact Sheets and information about VAWA are available for your use at www.vawa2005.org. [Click here to download a copy of the National Task Force's Grassroots Tool Kit.](#)

Stay Informed

Sign up for NCADV's Public Policy Legislative Update via our email list serve. NCADV sends regular VAWA alerts on the latest news on VAWA and other important domestic violence legislation. Send an email to publicpolicy@ncadv.org or call 202-745-1211 to sign up for these alerts. You may also visit the NCADV website at www.ncadv.org to read updates on VAWA Reauthorization. You can also learn more about our organization and other important domestic violence legislation. Additionally, visit the National Taskforce to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women website at www.vawa2005.org to learn more about the history of VAWA, read fact sheets on VAWA 2005 titles, and receive more information on how you can help us ensure VAWA reauthorization.

Other Important Information

Congressional Committees

Congressional Committees are vital part of the legislative process. The Judiciary Committee has primary jurisdiction over VAWA. If you are a constituent of any of these Members, it is crucial your Member hears from you about the importance of VAWA reauthorization. To find your Member's contact information visit www.congress.org.

[Senate Judiciary Committee](#)

[House Judiciary Committee](#)

Violence Against Women Act Talking Points

- The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) expires in September 2005, and the remarkable gains made in ending domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking could come to a halt if Congress does not reauthorize VAWA.
- We are now asking Congress to reauthorize and enhance existing VAWA programs and include new programs that better respond to community needs.
During the past decade, VAWA has saved lives and helped millions of victims find safety, security and self-sufficiency.
- Studies show that over the past 6 years VAWA has saved over \$14 billion in averted social costs, which include direct property losses, medical and mental health care, law enforcement response, victim services, lost productivity, reduced quality of life, and death.
- VAWA '05 includes critical programs and development of new services that respond to evolving community needs. Solution-based remedies should address the concerns the unique needs of survivors who are disabled, elderly survivors, Native Women, battered immigrant women, ethnic minority women, and survivors living in rural communities.
- VAWA '05 provides a comprehensive approach to survivors' housing needs that includes expanding transitional housing options, ensuring that victims can

- come forward without jeopardizing their current or future housing, creating permanent housing solutions that help develop communities and build collaborations between service providers, government agencies and housing developers.
- VAWA provides practical solutions to improving the response of the criminal justice and legal systems by expanding funding for local groups working with underserved communities, strengthening the criminal justice response to sexual assault, providing services for children and youth, and advocating for effective prevention programs.

Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Sample Letter

**The Honorable *Senator/Representative's Name*
United States *Senate/House of Representatives***

Dear [*Senator's/Representative's Name*]:

Over the past 10 years Congress has responded positively and effectively to help end domestic violence in our communities by funding Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) programs. VAWA programs such as the National Domestic Violence Hotline, battered women's shelters, and increased trainings for police, prosecutors and court officials have all contributed to the decline in domestic violence since VAWA was first authorized in 1994. VAWA is more than good social policy; it is also good fiscal policy. The first VAWA, authorized in 1994, has saved nearly \$14.8 billion in net averted social costs.

In recent years the success of these programs has resulted in a growing demand for services, with more victims and their children being referred to agencies every day. However, this September VAWA will expire. If Congress does not reauthorize and strengthen VAWA, thousands of local communities, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and victims assistance programs will lose valuable Federal support to ending domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

In addition to reauthorizing existing VAWA programs, we hope that you will support legislation that develops innovative VAWA programs to ensure that victims and their children can sustain safe housing, have better access to public benefits, receive legal assistance and provide a safe workplace. The reauthorization of VAWA gives Congress a unique opportunity to continue and expand successful programs that further the safety and stability of the lives of survivors of domestic violence.

Without VAWA programs, victims in *[insert your city and state]* cannot access the services they need to escape from violence. During the past decade, VAWA has saved lives and helped millions of women and children find safety, security and self-sufficiency.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact *[insert your name and program]*. We look forward to working with you on these important issues.

Sincerely,

Your Name and Organization