

Comprehensive Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Receives Bipartisan Approval in House of Representatives

286-138 Vote Reaffirms Congress's Commitment to Combating Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, the U.S. House of Representatives brought the Senate passed bipartisan Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization bill (VAWA) to the floor and voted 286 to 138 in favor of passage. The success of the bill, which has now passed both the House and Senate, reflects Congress's commitment to combating domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking in a comprehensive manner.

This bipartisan legislation, which will now go to the President for his signature, improves VAWA programs and strengthens protections for all victims of violence. In particular the bill reflects an important commitment to improve protections for Native American victims, immigrants, and LGBT victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The legislation also includes the reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA).

Casa de Esperanza has worked hard to secure the passage of a comprehensive VAWA bill through the policy advocacy efforts of its national initiative - the National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities. Casa de Esperanza worked, in collaboration with other national organizations, to ensure the passage of VAWA with the inclusion and improvement of essential remedies for immigrant victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and the improvement of grant programs targeting enhanced culturally and linguistically specific service for Communities of Color.

"Today's vote represents a victory for all victims of domestic violence," said Amy Sanchez, Casa de Esperanza Chief Executive for External Relations, "Together, Casa de Esperanza and other national organizations are celebrating the bill's bipartisan approval and an optimistic future."

The Leahy (D-VT)-Crapo (R-ID) VAWA reauthorization passed the Senate two weeks ago with the support of 78 Senators, including all Democrats, all women Senators and a majority of Republican Senators. The bill also had the backing of 1300 organizations who signed a letter to Congress asking for a bipartisan and comprehensive VAWA bill with protections for all victims.. Today's favorable vote in the House of Representatives on a

bipartisan version of the bill is largely a result of the continued efforts of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, where Casa de Esperanza serves on the Steering Committee.

"We are celebrating that Congress was able to come together in a bipartisan manner, in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, to enhance our nation's commitment to ending domestic violence and sexual assault, with a special emphasis on improving protections for marginalized communities," said Rosie Hidalgo, Casa de Esperanza's Director of Public Policy, "and we look forward to continuing to support the implementation of these programs."

The bipartisan support throughout Congress sends a clear message that the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act and the related issues are above political divides. Despite today's favorable vote, violence against women remains a critical problem in our nation. Casa de Esperanza will continue to passionately support improved prevention and intervention programs for victims of domestic and sexual violence and their families and will continue to advocate for legislation that does the same.

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[Casa de Esperanza](http://www.casadeesperanza.org) is the National Latin@ Institute on Domestic Violence whose mission is to mobilize Latinas and Latin@ communities to end domestic violence. The organization's National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities incorporates training and technical assistance, a public policy initiative in Washington, D.C., and a research center in Atlanta, GA, in an effort to advance effective responses to eliminate violence and promote healthy relationships. Casa de Esperanza also works within communities by providing advocacy, emergency shelter, a 24-hour bilingual crisis line, and opportunities for peer education. For more information, please visit www.casadeesperanza.org.