



For Immediate Release

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House and Senate Pass Act to provide lifesaving services and programs for community shelters and crisis centers

President set to sign the renewal of The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act

(December 10, 2010) Washington, DC - The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence joins our member programs and services all across the nation in celebrating the passage of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) as part of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). These vital programs, first passed in 1984 and 1974 respectively, were long overdue for reauthorization.

"In these grueling economic times, our community battered women's shelters were facing severe funding cuts and service reductions at the hands of state and private funders trying to staunch budget shortfalls. Reauthorizing FVPSA will ensure the funds reach the states and programs so that families facing domestic and sexual violence have an escape path," noted Rita Smith, Executive Director of the 32-year old coalition, NCADV, representing over 2,000 shelters and programs and individuals across the country.

The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) is an essential component of our nation's campaign to raise awareness about the cruel epidemic of domestic and sexual violence that shreds the lives of girls and women, boys and men. FVPSA authorizes lifesaving services to victims of domestic violence and their families, through shelters, support group and prevention counseling, legal assistance and service referrals to economic support systems and essential health services. The bill passed by the House on Wednesday and by the Senate today is an important improvement in our ongoing effort to address the criminal assault and sexual violence that affects our children, women and girls of all races, religions, ages, abilities and identities regardless of their economic or citizenship status or where they live. "Our vision is 'Every home a safe home,' but it's more than a slogan. It is a promise that NCADV makes to women and their families that our organization and our colleagues in the movement will never cease in our determination to stop violence against women," declared Ms. Smith.

Major thanks must go to individual members of Congress who championed FVPSA and CAPTA. In the House, Representatives Gwen Moore (D-WI) and Aaron Schock (R-IL), along with Judy Biggert (R-IL) and Gregorio Sablan (D-MP), introduced FVPSA (H.R. 4116) early this year and gathered 123 sponsors including 17 Republicans - a truly bipartisan bill. They were joined by Ed and Labor Committee chair George Miller (D-CA) and his committee colleagues John Kline (R-MN), Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), and Todd Platts (R-PA). In the Senate, HELP committee chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) and ranking member Mike Enzi (R-WY) pulled together the bipartisan Senate bill, spurred by subcommittee chair Chris Dodd (D-CT) and ranking member Lamar Alexander (R-TN). Victims of sexual and domestic violence owe them a big thank you for their stewardship.

FVPSA is the only dedicated federal funding source for domestic violence shelters and services, supporting emergency shelters, crisis hotlines, counseling services, victim assistance initiatives and programs for underserved communities. This year's bill

builds upon FVPSA's core strengths and includes critical improvements for the National DV Hotline, initiatives dealing with teen dating violence, services for our nation's territories and programs helping children who witness violence to name just a few. Additionally, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) not only continues its important work addressing child abuse, neglect and sexual violence, but adds an important cross-cutting component to improve services for both victims of child abuse and families that are experiencing domestic violence and child maltreatment.

"The fact that FVPSA/CAPTA reauthorization passed by Unanimous Consent in the Senate and under suspension of the rules by a unanimous voice vote in the House proves that this bipartisan Act is a national priority," added Ms. Smith. "NCADV looks forward to the President signing this bill so that advocates can begin work on next year's challenge -saving lives and reauthorizing the 1994 Violence Against Women Act."

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