

NNEDV Applauds Senate Passage of Violence Against Women Act ~ *Calls for Swift House Passage*

[Washington, DC ~ February 12, 2013] ~ Today, the U.S. Senate resoundingly passed S. 47, a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) by 78-22. The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) applauds the Senators who voted for VAWA's passage.

"It's about time," said Kim Gandy, President and CEO of NNEDV. "After two years of partisan wrangling, we are again close to renewing the nation's commitment to protecting victims of domestic violence. We commend the senators who voted for the bill, including every female senator of both parties, and urge their House colleagues to quickly follow suit."

The bipartisan Senate bill, authored by Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Mike Crapo (R-ID) and co-sponsored by 62 Democrats and Republicans, was reintroduced at the beginning of the 113th Congress. This reauthorization bill will address critical gaps in safety and services, and provide desperately needed resources and support to service providers and to victims.

"Senators Leahy and Crapo have never stopped fighting for the victims, even when the path to passage was difficult," said Gandy. "We are especially grateful for their efforts to ensure that victims of domestic violence have access to the services they need and deserve."

While VAWA's passage demonstrates broad, bipartisan support for this legislation and the services it provides, women of both parties have been disheartened that some Senators voted against this bill, choosing partisan politics over the needs of those suffering abuse.

Now, the House must move quickly towards passage, so that VAWA can be sent to the president for signature. Advocates and supporters of VAWA are in ongoing conversations with House leaders on both sides of the aisle, and are optimistic about passing an effective final bill. "It is the House's turn to stand with the millions who experience domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking, and pass a VAWA that safely and effectively meets the needs of all victims," concluded Gandy.

About VAWA

VAWA is the cornerstone of our nation's response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking, and because of VAWA, millions of victims have received lifesaving services and support. Despite VAWA's proven ability to substantially improve lives, it has not reached all victims. VAWA's reauthorization provides an opportunity to build upon the successes of the current law by including key improvements to protect and provide safety and access to justice for Native American, immigrant, and LGBT victims, as well as victims on college campuses and in communities of color. Additionally, a reauthorized VAWA must include strengthened housing protections that provide emergency housing transfer options for survivors, as well as implementation of transparent and effective accountability measures that support and strengthen, rather than endanger, the programs that assist victims.

