



For Immediate Release  
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## **House Bill to Reauthorize Violence Against Women Act Falls Short**

*Leadership substitute for Senate-passed bill fails to address victims' needs, must be improved before final passage*

[Washington, DC] Today, House Republican leaders introduced a bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). That bill fails to adequately support victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

“We were extremely hopeful that House leadership would introduce a bill that would safely and effectively meet the needs of all victims,” said Kim Gandy, President of the National Network to End Domestic Violence. “Unfortunately, the House substitute introduced today fails to do so.”

The House may vote on their bill as early as Wednesday, February 27th. NNEDV and other organizations are urging members of Congress to vote against this bill as it currently stands.

“There are over 20 House Republicans who have made public statements in support of a bipartisan VAWA that protects all victims. This is not that bill. We look forward to continuing to work with all members of Congress to make this a reality.”

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## **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.

## **About NNEDV**

*NNEDV, a 501(c)(3) organization, is the leading voice for domestic violence victims and their allies. NNEDV members include all 56 of the state and territorial coalitions against domestic violence, including over 2,000 local programs. NNEDV has been a premiere national organization advancing the movement against domestic violence for almost 20 years, having led efforts among domestic violence advocates and survivors in urging Congress to pass the landmark Violence Against Women Act of 1994. To learn more about NNEDV, please visit [www.nnedv.org](http://www.nnedv.org).*

## **Action Item**

- 1) Call the Capitol switchboard at 888.269.5702 and ask the operator to connect you to your Representative.
- 2) When you're connected to their offices, tell the person who answers the phone:
  - a. I am a constituent from (city and state) and my name is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. I am calling to urge Representative \_\_\_\_\_ to vote against the VAWA Reauthorization bill introduced by House leadership on February 21.
  - c. This bill does not adequately serve all victims, nor does it safely and effectively meet their needs. I believe that it is still possible for the House to reach agreement on a strong, bipartisan bill – but this is not that bill.

## **Background**

Why the House bill (a substitute to S. 47) will not safely or effectively meet the needs of all victims:

**Tribal provisions:** The House bill language contains a modified version of the Issa-Cole proposal from last Congress that would give tribes some authority over non-Native perpetrators. However, there are problematic provisions around civil redress, removal to federal courts, and a certification process.

**LGBT:** The House bill does not use the language of “sexual orientation or gender identity” in the underserved populations provisions, non-discrimination provisions or the STOP purpose area.

**Immigration:** The House bill starts with the provisions that were common to both S. 1925 and H.R. 4970 in the last Congress, and does not include any of the egregious rollbacks that were in H.R. 4970. However, the new House bill includes an amendment that expands the scope of evidence allowed in dv-related deportation proceedings (which raises concerns for victim-defendants swept into deportation proceedings), fails to include an effective date ensuring the retroactive application of the U visa age-out fix, and does not include IMBRA (International Marriage Broker Regulation Act) amendments to clarify penalties and ensure effective enforcement, among other omissions.

**Housing:** The House bill is not as strong as the Senate bill on housing provisions. The House bill 1) does not include adequate notice of VAWA housing rights to tenants and those facing eviction and 2) it makes the adoption of new emergency transfer policies voluntary by landlords and owners, rather than mandatory.

**Accountability:** The House bill's language is better than what we saw in H.R. 4970, but still contains a number of problematic provisions including an additional layer of grant oversight through the office of the Attorney General and mandatory exclusion/suspension provisions. It also leaves out the good language that would have required a conferral process between OVW and the coalitions to talk about VAWA grants and whether they are being administered efficiently and effectively.

**Campus:** The Campus SAVE Act is left out of the new House bill entirely.

Kim Gandy President and CEO National Network to End Domestic Violence

Thanks,

The Policy Team

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