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PRO-VAWA NATIONAL TASK FORCE HOSTS CAPITOL HILL RALLY

*Speakers, including Senate leadership, and supporters urge Congress to pass
REAL VAWA (S.1925), helping to end violence against women*

WASHINGTON, DC – This morning, thousands of supporters gathered at the U.S. Capitol to support a Violence Against Women Act reauthorization that serves ALL victims and contains NO rollbacks. This morning's rally was part of the National 10 Days of Action in support of The REAL VAWA bill pending in Congress. The rally was organized by the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence (National Task Force).

The National Task Force's campaign began June 24 and will conclude July 4 when Congress takes its holiday vacation. Supporters hope that the Senate will resolve the procedural problems in S.1925 and bring the bill to the discussion table with the House. A final bill must be passed before the end of summer, reauthorizing the landmark VAWA of 1994.

"VAWA Reauthorization and the immigration provisions within it have always been part of a bipartisan effort. These critical provisions must be maintained by Congress, and the reauthorization must be an opportunity to strengthen protections for victims of domestic violence rather than undermine their means of survival," stated **Juan Carlos Arean**, Director of the National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities at Casa de Esperanza; the organization is a member of the National Task Force.

Colin Goddard, survivor of the mass shooting at Virginia Tech on April 16, 2007, attended and delivered remarks on the need for increased protection from violence on college campuses. Other speakers included: **Daniel K. Akaka**, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs; **Patrick Leahy**, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee; **Michael Bolton**, Multi-Grammy Award-Winning, Singer and Songwriter; U.S. Representative **Judy Biggert** (IL-13); U.S. Representative **Gwen Moore** (WI-4); **Dr. Avis Jones-DeWeever** of the National Council of Negro Women; **Terry O'Neill** of the National Organization for Women; **Rabbi David Saperstein**, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism; and **Juana Majel** of the National Congress of American Indians.

"Native women are victimized at rates higher than any other group in the United States, and they cannot afford any further delay in getting VAWA reauthorized," said **Juana Majel**, 1st Vice President of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and co-chair of the NCAI Task Force on Violence Against Women. "Each day that passes in which Congress refuses to act is another day that equal access to justice is denied to our Native sisters, mothers, and daughters. Indian Country urges Congress to pass the bipartisan Senate VAWA bill immediately."

In the face of mounting legislative gridlock, REAL VAWA supporters made it clear that protecting women from violence could not wait, calling on Congressional leaders to hear their strong and united message once and for all: **your work on VAWA is not over.**

Supporters note that the REAL VAWA, if implemented, would positively impact a broad range of survivors, including tribal members living in Indian country and members of the LGBT community:

“LGBT people experience violence at the same rate as any other community, but receive fewer supportive services – and are often actively discriminated against when seeking support” said **Sharon Stapel**, Executive Director, New York City Anti-Violence Project, “To deny any victim protection from domestic and sexual violence is unacceptable. Congress must pass a VAWA that includes all victims.”

“Congress can’t go on vacation leaving rape victims abandoned and advocates disillusioned,” added **Monika Johnson Hostler**, Board President for the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence. “The Senate must solve the blue slip problem and the House must come to the table this week so that we can have a final VAWA this summer.”

“Key improvements in the way we address dating violence among young people and make our college campuses safer are in the bills to reauthorize VAWA that are currently languishing in Congress,” stated **Marjorie Gilberg**, Executive Director of Break the Cycle. “With the CDC reporting that almost 70% of female victims experienced some form of intimate partner violence before the age of 25, we can’t afford to wait any longer.”

Today’s rally, which lasted from 11:30 am – 1:30 pm, marks Day 2 of the National 10 Days of Action; supporters are optimistic that Congress will hear their calls and that the Senate will take action by the July 4 recess.

The REAL VAWA passed in the Senate on April 26. Advocates are urging those concerned with the issue to help ensure that the Senate provisions prevail over the House version and that action to craft a final bill begin before July 4 many local VAWA supporters will be contacting their local congresspeople or visiting the Task Force [website](#) for more information.

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The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women (“NTF”) is focused on the development, passage and implementation of effective public policy to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. The full membership of the NTF is comprised of a large and diverse group of national, tribal, state, territorial and local organizations, as well as individuals, committed to securing an end to violence against women. Included are civil rights organizations, labor unions, advocates for children and youth, anti poverty groups, immigrant and refugee rights organizations, women’s rights leaders, education groups, and others focusing on a wide range of social, economic and racial justice issues. For over a decade, the NTF and its numerous subcommittees have been an important vehicle through which to promote our shared public policy goals.

For more information on NTF, please visit: 4vawa.org.