



National Task Force
to End Sexual and
Domestic Violence Against Women

December 19, 2011

Take Action for VAWA during the Holidays

Thank you to the hundreds of organizations that signed onto our VAWA support letter which is on its way to Congress. New sponsors are signing onto s. 1925 every day. To see if your Senator has signed on, go to <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.php> and type in S. 1925 in the bill search box. Note: The Senate has gone home for the holidays and may not come back until next year, so even if your Senators decide to sponsor VAWA in the next few weeks, their names won't be listed officially until they are back in session.

The time is now to reach out to Congress and support VAWA through letters, online media, and messages that highlight the programs and issues important to you! If you have questions or want to report back about your efforts or results, please email ReauthorizeVAWA@gmail.com.

TAKE ACTION TODAY!

Suggested actions for this week include:

- 1) Emailing Congress with a holiday message in support of VAWA.
- 2) Contacting Congress about the importance of unemployment insurance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.
- 3) Participating in the #ReauthorizeVAWA Twitter Carnival on Wednesday;

ACTION 1: Email your [Senators](#) and [Representatives](#) TODAY with this message:

"I am writing to wish you and yours a peaceful and joyful holiday. As you head home to your families, please keep in mind the girls and boys, women and men, families and communities ravaged by domestic and sexual abuse. For them, the warmth and love of this holiday season is a distant memory or something they've never experienced. Help give them hope for a better future by continuing your advocacy and commitment to stop the violence. I look forward to working with you next year on reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act."

ACTION 2: As you connect with your senators and representatives one last time this year, we also ask that you urge them to finish their work on unemployment insurance for survivors and non-survivors alike.

Because of the economic downturn, the Congress has voted nine times in the last 2½ years to make extended unemployment insurance benefits available to the long term unemployed. At the end of last week, the Senate adjourned after passing a 2 month extension of benefits. The House will act as soon as **today**. Regardless of the length of the extension, it should be free of partisan gimmicks, like drug testing, GED requirements and the slashing of benefits.

Separately, but equally importantly, because of recent changes in federal law, 40 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands make survivors of domestic violence eligible for unemployment insurance (UI). A significant number of states also make benefits available to survivors of stalking and sexual assault. UI benefits can provide a crucial lifeline for survivors who must leave their jobs because of violence or stalking directed against them or an immediate family member. It is crucial that survivors, regardless of where they live, are eligible for benefits.

Email your members (links above) that their work is not finished! They must: 1) put in place a clean unemployment insurance extension; and 2) ensure that survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking are eligible for Unemployment Insurance in all 50 states. Want to know about your state's laws? Visit Legal Momentum's state law guide: <http://www.legalmomentum.org/our-work/women-at-work/state-law-guides.html>

ACTION 3: Participate in the #ReauthorizeVAWA Twitter Carnival on Wednesday, December 21st at 12pm EST, 11am CST, 10am MST, 9am PST

HUGE thanks to all who all who have been tweeting about VAWA. **Now we need to make #ReauthorizeVAWA a trending topic on Twitter.** In order to do that we need a lot of people to tweet messages including the hashtag #ReauthorizeVAWA in a SHORT amount of time.

The bigger a splash we can make by sharing this, the better!

You can help us trend #ReauthorizeVAWA by tweeting (Make sure it includes #ReauthorizeVAWA in it) on Wednesday, December 21st at noon EST. If you can't/won't be in front of your computers at noon you can still send out the post on Twitter at noon by signing up for <http://www.hootsuite.com> and scheduling your message to post on December 21st at noon (just make sure you're time settings are for EST). During the Twitter Carnival, you should also retweet and respond to the twitters of others – always including #ReauthorizeVAWA.

Thanks for the terrific tweets already out there!

Check out and “like” our new Facebook page where you can find a toolkit and other action and information items:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/National-Task-Force-to-End-Sexual-and-Domestic-Violence/230525243682392?sk=wall>

If you aren't on one of the VAWA email lists or want to add members of your staff or state/community leaders to our grassroots alerts e-mailing list, send names and contact information including email to Sean Black, sblack@icasa.org.