



# Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

UNITED STATES SENATOR - DELAWARE

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## **BIDEN Amendment Boosts Funding for Essential Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Programs**

*Washington, DC* – The Senate today passed an amendment to the FY 2009 Budget Resolution, introduced by **U.S. Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-DE)**, that increases the funding for key Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) programs. The Violence Against Women Act of 2005, which was unanimously passed by Congress, authorized a little over \$1 billion for programs. The President’s FY 2009 budget proposes \$472 million in funding – a drastic \$120 million cut to VAWA programs, as well as a plan to collapse over 20 separate VAWA programs into one “consolidated competitive grant program.” This funding reorganization proposal would create an unfair playing field, forcing both small and large entities like victims service organizations, police, judges and states to compete against each other for funding.

“We cannot afford to turn our backs on women and families in need of protection” said Sen. Biden, author of the landmark Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). “We have made too much progress since 1994 to cut off the flow of funding now – we need to reinvigorate funding for Violence Against Women Act programs today.”

Sen. Biden’s amendment would add \$100 million to the funding allocation for VAWA programs, which are administered by the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services. Sen. Biden’s amendment would provide a much-needed funding boost to programs that will train more police officers, judges, and prosecutors, expand transitional housing for victims, improve services for battered women in rural areas and Indian land, launch prevention programs aimed at boys and young men and much more.

Domestic violence impacts one in every four women, yet the Administration proposed cutting spending by almost a third – a dramatic deviation from historic spending on family violence programs. If this budget is followed, the number of abused victims and their children turned away from critical services will likely increase. National figures since the Act’s passage in 1994 show substantial progress: domestic violence has dropped by almost 50 percent, incidents of rape are down by 60 percent, and the number of women killed by an abusive husband or boyfriend is down by 22 percent. Today, more than half of all rape victims are stepping forward to report the crime, acts of bravery that often need the protection and encouragement that VAWA’s funding provides.

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Since passage of the Act, Delaware alone has received more than \$10 million in federal assistance for counseling, legal services, and safe housing for victims and their children to start anew. In Delaware, dedicated local organizations, police and judges have led the fight to eradicate domestic violence, using federal funding to reduce domestic violence incidents by over 1,000 since 2001. Service providers in the State and across country are clamoring for help as more and more women gather their courage and report the violence to police, emergency room nurses or hotline operators. For more information on VAWA funding and programs, a coalition of domestic and sexual violence advocacy organizations has prepared a detailed report found at a [www.nnedv.org/pdf/BriefingBook08docs/Policy/BriefingBookFY09.pdf](http://www.nnedv.org/pdf/BriefingBook08docs/Policy/BriefingBookFY09.pdf).

A recent census of domestic violence services is available at [www.nnedv.org/census/states](http://www.nnedv.org/census/states).