



January 3, 2013

*Please forward widely!*

## **The 113<sup>th</sup> Congress must pass VAWA immediately.**

We wish you a safe and happy new year! Over the holidays, we have had time to pause to reflect on our progress in authorizing a strong and responsive VAWA. Now, as 2013 begins, we know that we cannot lose momentum. Join with us in 2013 to ensure early passage of this essential legislation.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of you, the countless advocates and supporters, we made critical advancements in educating Congress and the general public on the real needs of all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. And Congress responded to our efforts, engaging in serious conversation over that language needed to complete a safe and comprehensive VAWA. While we came very close, time ran out. We were all deeply disappointed that a final bill was not reached in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. The U.S. House of Representatives continued to voice strong opposition to offering basic protections to certain vulnerable populations. Our anger is at the missed opportunity in 2012 to enact all the important improvements that we all worked so hard to add to the bill – housing, campus and sexual assault provisions and enhanced services and explicit programs for communities of color, immigrant, tribal and LGBT victims and survivors.

However, we also will not have the harmful provisions added by the Senate Judiciary Committee and the House Republicans in the 2012 version of the bill. It is very important that we celebrate our past three years of awareness and advocacy even as we mourn VAWA 2012's failure to pass. While the reauthorization bill is "dead", VAWA itself is very much alive and will continue in its 2005 version.

Programs and services will not close because we didn't reauthorize VAWA but they are certainly threatened because the budget crises at the local, state and national levels are always looming. While the deal on the "fiscal cliff" delayed harmful across-the-board cuts to federal programs until early March, our analysis shows nearly 200,000 victims of violence would lose services if another agreement is not made. With your help, we can build on the work we've done in 2012 to pass VAWA in 2013 and stop these destructive budget cuts.

Today, the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress will be sworn in. There is no time to waste in addressing the needs of victims. We call on the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress to act immediately on VAWA this month and pass a bill that safely and effectively meets the needs of all victims.

**Onward together!**