

*H.R. 5578 establishes a national standard for survivors' rights in the reporting, investigation, and prosecution of sexual assault crimes.*



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**JWI Responds to Passage of H.R. 5578, Survivors' Bill of Rights Act**

*The bill is an important step forward for sexual assault survivors*

**Washington, D.C.** – Jewish Women International (JWI) applauds the House of Representatives for its passage of H.R. 5578, the Survivors' Bill of Rights Act of 2016.

The Survivors' Bill of Rights Act was sponsored by Rep. Mimi Walters (R-CA-45) and Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA-19), with 37 cosponsors including Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL-23), Rep. Ryan Costello (R-PA-6), and Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT-3). The Senate version of the bill was sponsored by Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and passed the Senate in May 2016 as part of the bipartisan Adam Walsh Reauthorization Act.

The Survivors' Bill of Rights Act establishes a national standard for survivors' rights in the reporting, investigation, and prosecution of sexual assault crimes. Specifically, a survivor will have the right to have her rape kit preserved for the duration of the statute of limitations; the right to be notified in writing sixty days before her rape kit is scheduled to be destroyed; the right to request additional preservation of her rape kit; and the right to be informed of the results of her rape kit.

JWI CEO Lori Weinstein issued the following statement:

*Sexual violence continues to impact millions of women and men in the United States each year, and too often, justice is not served for survivors. By passing the Survivors' Bill of Rights Act, Congress has taken an important step forward in reforming and improving responses to sexual violence.*

*No survivor should have to fear seeking medical attention or reporting to law enforcement; survivors should be able to trust that their dignity and rights will be respected. This vital bill helps to ensure that survivors' reports are taken seriously, that medical evidence is collected and preserved, and that a survivor's right to information is honored throughout the investigative process. By working together with survivors, medical providers, law enforcement, prosecutors, and advocates can create change and prevent further violence.*

*As we mark this progress, we also renew our commitment to our sustained advocacy and education for women and girls. JWI will continue our work to prevent sexual violence, foster healthy relationships, and change the culture for a safer tomorrow.*

**# # #**

**Jewish Women International (JWI)** is the leading Jewish organization working to end violence against women and girls domestically and internationally. JWI is a Steering Committee member of NO MORE and the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women and convenes the Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and the Clergy Task Force to End Domestic Abuse in the Jewish Community, and is a member of the Gun Violence Table. JWI's advocacy efforts focus on the passage of legislation that supports women and girls, ensures their economic security, and protects their right to live free of violence. For more information, please visit [www.jwi.org](http://www.jwi.org) or call us at 800-323-2823.