

U.S. Department of Labor

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Statement by Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis on 18th anniversary of Violence Against Women Act

WASHINGTON — Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis today issued the following statement to mark the 18th anniversary of passage of the landmark Violence Against Women Act:

"This month, we mark the historic passage of VAWA by redoubling our commitment to a zero tolerance policy against this heinous crime and our efforts to help victims rebuild their lives.

"Intimate partner violence is the number one cause of family homelessness in America. It puts our young women in danger of long-term physical and emotional harm. And it puts their children at greater risk of substance abuse, emotional disorders and becoming abusers themselves later in life. We've made great strides in increasing public awareness about this epidemic, but more work needs to be done. Today, we're asking all Americans to play a role in stopping domestic violence against women when they see it by calling 800-799-SAFE or visiting <http://www.TheHotLine.org>.

"One of the most insidious forms of violence against women is also one of the most hidden from public view: human trafficking. The U.S. Department of Labor is working with law enforcement on anti-trafficking teams in major metropolitan centers to crack down on perpetrators who use violence as a weapon to keep women working in conditions of modern-day slavery. We've taken unprecedented steps to protect women who are in this country as temporary foreign workers, because they are especially vulnerable to physical and sexual coercion. We're fighting for restitution for victims of trafficking and working in communities across the country to help them heal, get back on their feet and find employment to provide for their families.

"We're also working closely with our returning women veterans. These heroes face the same issues as their male counterparts, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, sleeplessness and battle injuries, but they also face distressingly high rates of domestic violence and sexual trauma. We know that this situation substantially increases their risk of homelessness and makes the readjustment to civilian life exponentially more difficult. The Department of Labor has released a trauma guide to give service providers new tools to tailor their treatments and better serve the unique needs of women veterans so they get the assistance they need to re-enter the workforce.

"Finally, the department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration is focused on preventing violence against women in the workplace. It's appalling that homicide is the leading cause of death for women in the workplace. OSHA takes this reality extremely seriously. While we know that workplace violence can strike anywhere at any time, research shows that health care and social service settings and late night retail establishments are at especially high risk. OSHA has issued the first-ever directive on inspecting incidences of workplace violence in health care settings and other industries vulnerable to this crime. We're partnering every day with employers and workers across the country to educate them on strategies to prevent and reduce workplace violence."

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