



NEWS RELEASE
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Domestic and Sexual Violence Experts Laud Introduction of 'Violence Against Women Act' in House

A broad coalition of the nation's leading experts on domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence praised yesterday's introduction of the *Violence Against Women Act of 2005* (*VAWA* – H.R. 2876) in the House of Representatives. Introduced by chief co-sponsors Representatives Mark Green (R-WI) and John Conyers (D-MI), with Deborah Pryce (R-OH), Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL), Hilda Solis (D-CA), Dave Reichert (R-WA), Melissa Hart (R-PA), Charles Boustany (R-LA), Michael Michaud (D-ME), Mark Foley (R-FL), Ted Poe (R-TX), Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Shelley Moore Capitol (R-WV), Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Lois Capps (D-CA) and Louise Slaughter (D-NY), the bill re-authorizes the landmark legislation that was first passed in 1994, enhancing services for victims of sexual assault and improving programs that address health, prevention and other essential issues. A group of leaders in the Senate introduced their version of the *Violence Against Women Act of 2005* last week.

The legislation will expire in September if Congress does not re-authorize it. Enacted in 1994, *VAWA* dramatically improved the law enforcement response to violence against women and made many more services available to victims. In 2000, Congress re-authorized the law, adding services for rural, older and immigrant women, as well as those with disabilities.

“For ten years, *VAWA* has provided needed support to women, children and men facing violence. The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women is urging Congress to quickly re-authorize this essential legislation. We need to continue the programs that have worked so well, and build on our success by revising and expanding the law. We salute Reps. Green and Conyers, Women's Caucus leaders and their colleagues for their work to stop domestic and sexual violence. We look forward to working with them to further strengthen and pass the bill,” said Lisalyn R. Jacobs, Vice President of Government Relations for Legal Momentum, which coordinates the Task Force – a coalition of more than 2,000 organizations dedicated to ending violence against women. “They are doing a real service to the nation.”

The new House bill would enhance the civil and criminal justice response; improve services and outreach to victims; provide resources for sexual assault victims through rape crisis centers and state coalitions; help children and youth who experience or witness violence; address the needs of victims from communities of color; aid immigrant and tribal victims; and support prevention, health, housing and economic security programs designed to stop violence and help victims.

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NOTE: More information on the *Violence Against Women Act of 2005* is available at www.vawa2005.org