

U.S. Newswire

June 30, 2006 Friday 9:02 AM EST

House Passes \$25 Million Increase for VAWA Funding; Increase Will Fund Critically Needed New Programs to End Domestic Violence

WASHINGTON, June 30 – The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) lauds the House of Representatives for approving measures to increase funding for the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) by \$25 million in the Science, State, Justice and Commerce (SSJC) Appropriations Bill. The increased funding will support new programs created by the 2005 reauthorization of VAWA. These increases are on top of a crucial \$24.5 million increase for existing programs already included in the SSJC Appropriations Bill by Chairman Frank Wolf (R-VA), Ranking Member Alan Mollohan (D-WV) and other members of the Appropriations Committee.

“Amidst widespread budget cuts, the House continues to demonstrate its commitment to ending domestic violence. We thank Chairman Wolf, Ranking Member Mollohan and the members of the Appropriations Committee for making VAWA funding a priority,” said Sue Else, President of NNEDV. “Increased funding means better resources for our communities to respond to and end domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.”

The House passed two separate amendments to increase funding by \$10 million for programs serving children and youth who witness and experience domestic violence and/or sexual assault; critical resources and services for Tribal communities to address domestic and sexual violence; and to support the first federal funding stream for sexual assault programs. The House also passed an amendment to add an additional \$5 million for VAWA programs, including Jessica Gonzales Victims Assistants, which help improve enforcement of protective orders.

“The amendments offered by Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Jay Inslee (D-WA), Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL) and Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) are critical to enhancing services for victims and creating prevention strategies to stop the violence,” said Else. “The leadership of these Members of Congress will help save lives and prevent future violence.”

NNEDV also commends Representatives Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI), John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI), Mark Green (R-WI), Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Hilda Solis (D-CA), Ted Poe (R-TX), Katherine Harris (R-FL), Jim Costa (D-CA), Mel Watt (D-NC), Grace Napolitano (D-CA), and Mike Honda (D-CA) for their leadership advocating for increased VAWA funding.

The Senate is expected to set their recommendations for VAWA funding levels in the Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Bill later this summer.

In December 2005, the House and Senate unanimously approved the reauthorization of VAWA.

VAWA 2005 takes a more holistic approach to addressing violence against women. In addition to enhancing criminal and civil justice and community-based responses to these crimes, VAWA creates notable new focus areas such as:

- developing prevention strategies to stop the violence before it starts,
- protecting individuals from unfair eviction due to their status as victims of domestic violence or stalking,
- creating the first federal funding stream to support rape crisis centers,
- developing culturally- and linguistically-specific services for communities,
- enhancing programs and services for victims with disabilities, and
- broadening VAWA service provisions to include children and teens.

Initially passed in 1994, VAWA created the first federal legislation acknowledging domestic violence and sexual assaults as crimes, and provided federal resources to encourage community-coordinated responses to combating the violence. Its reauthorization in 2000 improved the foundation established by VAWA 1994 by creating a much-needed legal assistance program for victims and expanding the definition of crime to cover dating violence and stalking.

NNEDV has been a leading force in efforts to reauthorize VAWA and fund these critical federal programs. NNEDV and its member state domestic violence coalitions played a crucial role in the passage of VAWA in 1994 and its reauthorizations in 2000 and 2005. NNEDV's sister organization, the National Network to End Domestic Violence Fund (NNEDV Fund), has been instrumental in assisting state domestic violence coalitions and local communities in implementing current VAWA programs.

The National Network to End Domestic Violence, a social change organization representing state domestic violence coalitions, is dedicated to creating a social, political and economic environment in which violence against women no longer exists. For more information, please visit <http://www.nnedv.org>.

Contact: Cheryl L. O'Donnell of the National Network to End Domestic Violence, 202-543-5566 ext. 23 or codonnell@nnedv.org

Copyright © 2006 U.S. Newswire, a division of Medialink Worldwide Incorporated.