NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS (NCAI)

For Immediate Release
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NCAI Statement on Bipartisan Movement on Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Tribal Provisions

Washington, DC – Significant progress is being made on the long sought after Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) reauthorization, including the critical tribal provisions of the bill, and the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) is calling on House Majority Leader Cantor and authors of recent Senate and House legislation to continue discussions and pass final legislation.

“We believe there is a path to bipartisan agreement on the tribal provisions of VAWA. We remain hopeful that a comprehensive VAWA bill can and will move forward before this session of Congress ends,” said Jacqueline Pata, Executive Director of NCAI. “It’s hero time on both sides of the aisle, and we believe all the discussions happening on VAWA, in addition to the discussions surrounding the Issa/Cole version, will be successful and will protect all women, including Native women.”

Last week, Congressman Darrell Issa (R-CA) and Tom Cole (R-OK) introduced H.R. 6625, a new stand-alone house version of VAWA which contains language to addresses court jurisdiction and tribal judicial parity in prosecuting non-Indian defendants. NCAI is supportive of this legislation, and in a letter to the Senate authors of VAWA, Senators Leahy (D-VT) and Crapo (R-ID), NCAI called for support of this legislation.

In a statement released last week, Senator Leahy referenced this letter and provided an optimistic response on the record, “the National Congress of American Indians has urged Senator Crapo and me ‘to take a serious look at the Issa/Cole provision.’ We are. I urge the House Republican leadership to do so, as well.” Yesterday a letter was sent by a group of bipartisan members of Congress calling on Speaker Boehner and Leader Cantor for action on a comprehensive VAWA.

Female tribal leaders and members of NCAI's Violence Against Women Task Force are actively meeting with lawmakers on Capitol Hill this week to ensure Indian Country's voice is heard and to see that the tribal provisions are understood.

About The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI):
Founded in 1944, the National Congress of American Indians is the oldest, largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization in the country. NCAI advocates on behalf of tribal governments and communities, promoting strong tribal-federal government-to-government policies, and promoting a better understanding among the general public regarding American Indian and Alaska Native governments, people and rights. For more information visit www.ncai.org

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