Urge the Senate to Vote on VAWA

April 17, 2012

Urge Senator Reid to schedule a vote THIS WEEK! VAWA (S. 1925) has 61 sponsors – and Senate Majority Leader Reid has still not called the bill to the floor! In the meantime, those who oppose VAWA are developing alternative bills that would undercut VAWA. Tell Senator Reid to call the bill to the floor this week. Tell your Senators to support S. 1925, the real VAWA!

TAKE ACTION:

1. Urge Senator Reid to schedule VAWA for a vote THIS WEEK.
2. Write a letter to the editor to get the real VAWA to the Senate floor (sample below).

**Action 1: S. 1925 has enough sponsors to go to the Senate floor for a vote without a filibuster. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) has the power to schedule VAWA for a vote. Ask him to schedule a vote THIS WEEK.**

Suggested message: “Senator Reid, VAWA has 61 co-sponsors and can get a vote for cloture now. In the meantime, those who oppose VAWA are developing a bill that would undercut VAWA. Please schedule a date in April that S.1925, the real VAWA, will be heard on the Senate floor.”

If you are not from Nevada, call 202-224-3542 (D.C. office).
If you are from Nevada, call 775-686-5750 (Reno office).

**Action 2: Write a letter to the editor to get VAWA to the Senate Floor! Find suggested language below which you should feel free to edit and personalize.**
To The Editor

The Violence Against Women Act, S. 1925, is a strong, bipartisan bill that will reauthorize essential laws and programs for another five years and build on effective, existing programs to meet needs of victims of domestic and sexual violence. This legislation, introduced by Senator Leahy (D-VT) and Senator Crapo (R-ID), currently has 61 co-sponsors, including eight Republicans. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) should call the bill to the Senate floor for a vote that would demonstrate Congress’ commitment to end this violence. Delaying this vote threatens the progress our country has made toward ending domestic and sexual violence and building safer communities.

VAWA saves lives and money – $12.6 billion in its first 6 years alone. Approximately $400 million in annual funding supports local law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and victim services. Since its passage in 1994, all states have strengthened rape laws and the number of individuals killed by an intimate partner has decreased by 34% for women and 57% for men.

Critics of the Leahy-Crapo bill fear that the bill will help “too many” victims. Critics say S. 1925 gives immigrants a “new” way to enter the U.S., while in reality; provisions to protect abused immigrants have been in place since 1994. They also claim S. 1925 would force all domestic violence and sexual assault programs to serve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) victims or be charged with discrimination. In reality, S. 1925 has a provision that allows states to fund services specifically targeted to LGBT victims. They say S. 1925 violates the Constitution by giving tribal courts the authority to punish non-Indians for committing domestic violence on tribal lands. In fact, S. 1925 requires tribal courts to provide the same Constitutional protections afforded to defendants in state criminal courts.

Senate leadership must move quickly to bring S. 1925 to the floor. A vote for the Leahy-Crapo bill says, unequivocally, to all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking, “We will help you wherever and whenever you need help.” The time has come for Senator Reid to call this bill to the floor and once again reauthorize this critical legislation.

Sincerely,
[Name, Title, Organization, Contact Info]