Urgent Action Needed on VAWA Tribal Provisions

Thanks so much for all of the action you have taken on VAWA – your calls are making a difference and your voices are being heard! The pressure is on and there has been real progress in talks with Senate and House leadership about passing a final VAWA during the lame duck session.

As described below, vital protections for Native American victims are still in jeopardy.* Congressman Issa (R-CA) has introduced a bill that would provide these protections. But House leadership needs to hear from you. Urge them to accept Issa’s bill and pass a VAWA that protects all victims.

Action Item #1:
- Use this number 888.269.5702 to connect to the Capitol switchboard (using this number allows NNEDV to track the number of calls being made). Then ask to be connected to your U.S. Representative (www.house.gov) or Senator (www.senate.gov).
- Ask your Members of Congress to sign on as a co-sponsor or pledge their support for the Issa § 904 compromise language (H.R. 6625)

Action Item #2:
- Call Speaker Boehner and Leader Cantor using 888.269.5702 and tell them that a final VAWA that does not protect Native women and does not hold perpetrators accountable is unacceptable.
- Urge them to support the Issa compromise on tribal provisions (H.R. 6625) and include that language in VAWA so that a final VAWA can move forward to protect all victims.

The Background

American Indian and Alaska Native women are abused, raped and stalked at far greater rates that any other population of women in United States – 6 out of 10 will be physically assaulted in their lifetime, and 1 in 3 Native women will be raped. Eighty-eight percent of the abuse against Native women is committed by non-Native men—but this abuse goes unchecked because police officers, prosecutors and judges on tribal lands do not have the authority to perform their legal obligations regarding these non-Native men. This is simply unconscionable. Each of us has an opportunity, now, to right this wrong.

Some Members of Congress continue to resist expanding tribal courts’ criminal jurisdiction, as proposed in Section 904 of the Senate’s VAWA bill.

Congressman Darrell Issa (R-CA) and several of his Republican colleagues introduced H.R. 6625, the Violence Against Indian Women Act, which contains compromise solutions to help address opponents’ constitutional concerns regarding tribal court jurisdiction and move VAWA forward. Other House Republicans have also co-sponsored the bill. NNEDV praises Congressman Issa’s leadership and is committed to working with Congressman Issa and other House and Senate Republicans to enact these provisions. NNEDV is also asking Speaker Boehner and Leader Cantor to support the compromise provisions so that VAWA can protect all victims.

Thank you for all of your hard work and advocacy to end domestic violence!

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