When Congress authorized the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), the Members recognized the importance of this issue—that it is a national crisis that affects every police department, prosecutor’s office, and court in the country. The fallout from domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking is felt in every corner of our communities, and it requires national leadership to address.

The Director of OVW is Senate-confirmed, in large part because the duties of the Director include far more than merely administering grants. The Director is charged by Congress with responsibilities that span across all of the various components of government, including: coordinating the federal government’s response to the four crimes; serving at the request of the Attorney General on national committees, task forces, and similar bodies that address issues relating to the four crimes; and serving, at the request of the President, as the U.S. representative on issues relating to the four crimes in international settings. Specifically, the Director is charged with:

1. Maintaining liaison with the judicial branches of the Federal and State Governments on matters relating to violence against women.
2. Providing information to the President, the Congress, the judiciary, State, local, and tribal governments, and the general public on matters relating to violence against women.
3. Serving, at the request of the Attorney General, as the representative of the Department of Justice on domestic task forces, committees, or commissions addressing policy or issues relating to violence against women.
4. Serving, at the request of the President, acting through the Attorney General, as the representative of the United States Government on human rights and economic justice matters related to violence against women in international fora, including, but not limited to, the United Nations.
5. Carrying out the functions of the Department of Justice under the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (title IV of Public Law 103–322) and the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 (division B of Public Law 106–386), including—
   (a) the development of policy, protocols, and guidelines;
   (b) the development and management of grant programs and other programs, and the provision of technical assistance under such programs; and
   (c) the award and termination of grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts.
6. Providing technical assistance, coordination, and support to—
   (a) other components of the Department of Justice, in efforts to develop policy and to enforce Federal laws relating to violence against women, including the litigation of civil and criminal actions relating to enforcing such laws;
   (b) other Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies, in efforts to develop policy, provide technical assistance, and improve coordination among agencies carrying out efforts to eliminate violence against women, including Indian or indigenous women; and
   (c) grantees, in efforts to combat violence against women and to provide support and assistance to victims of such violence. (42 U.S.C. 3796gg 0b)

Furthermore, the Office is more efficient as a separate entity. When OVW’s financial and audit functions were carried out by OJP, there was no way to determine in a line-by-line budget, how much money OJP was actually spending on VAWA grant work. Now that OVW is separate, their budget is clear, down to the penny, as to what is being spent on the Office’s various duties, making it far easier to track fraud, waste, and abuse.