May 8, 2012

Statement on the House Judiciary Committee’s Passage of the Adams Bill

Today, the House Judiciary Committee marked up and passed the Adams (R-FL) version of VAWA, H.R. 4970. The National Task Force and our thousands of community activists all across the nation have worked very hard in the last few weeks to defeat this harmful bill that sets back the clock on VAWA, hurts and excludes survivors of violence and in some cases gives more rights to perpetrators than victims. In a near party-line 17-15 vote, one Member, Representative Ted Poe (R-TX), crossed the aisle and stood firmly with the field and on the side of victims. As Co-Chair of the Victims’ Rights Caucus, he joined VAWA’s Democratic champions and voted against the bill. The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women, a coalition representing thousands of organizations, service providers, researchers, educators, religious leaders, law enforcement, advocacy groups and victims all across the nation, continues to have grave concerns about this legislation that contains punitive provisions that will harm victims and exclude key communities.

In today’s committee markup, a substitute amendment offered by Ranking Member John Conyers (D-MI) that closely mirrors the bipartisan Senate-passed bill was not even allowed to be considered or debated. Numerous amendments were offered by our House champions to improve the Adams bill by including vulnerable communities such as Native women, LGBTQ victims, and immigrant victims, and striking mandatory minimum sentencing, but these amendments were consistently defeated by the House committee majority. Despite these disappointing results, the National Task Force will now turn our efforts to the full House of Representatives in order to pass an inclusive VAWA that is a real step forward for all victims of violence. That vote could be as early as next week so champions of the “real VAWA” have their work cut out for them.

Check our website for updates: www.4vawa.org.

If you aren't on one of the VAWA email lists or want to add members of your staff or state /community leaders to our grassroots alerts e-mailing list, send names and contact information including email to Sean Black, sblack@icasa.org.