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## Senate Approves VAWA

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On October 4, the Senate approved, by unanimous consent, a bill (S. 1197) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). The Senate Judiciary Committee approved the measure on September 8 (see *The Source*, 9/9/05). The House passed its version of the legislation (H.R. 3402) on September 28 (see *The Source*, 9/30/05). A House and Senate conference committee will now meet to work out differences in the two bills.

During committee consideration, an amendment to allow the attorney general to collect DNA samples from individuals who have been arrested or detained was approved amidst some controversy. As a result, the version approved by the Senate narrows the DNA provision by allowing individuals who are not charged, or who are acquitted, to have their DNA removed from the national database. The Senate-approved measure also makes several other technical changes to the committee-approved bill, including narrowing some of the provisions related to battered immigrant women.

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) praised passage of the bill: “I am pleased that the 2005 reauthorization of VAWA will address the needs of immigrants, Native Americans, children, and youth. Since the act's original passage, our commitment has yielded extraordinary progress nationwide. Domestic violence has dropped by almost 50 percent. Incidents of rape are down by 60 percent. The number of women killed by an abusive husband or boyfriend is down by 22 percent, and more than half of all rape victims are stepping forward to report the crime. Additionally, over a million women have found justice in our courtrooms and obtained domestic violence protective orders.”