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TEXAS COUNCIL ON FAMILY VIOLENCE AND TEXAS ASSOCIATION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT STRONGLY ENCOURAGE TEXAS SENATORS JOHN CORNYN AND KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON TO STAY AT THE TABLE TO NEGOTIATE A BIPARTISAN REAUTHORIZATION OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT. FAILURE CANNOT BE AN OPTION.

Austin, Texas – March 19, 2012– The Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV) and the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA) jointly call on Texas Senators John Cornyn and Kay Bailey Hutchison and all members of Congress to stay at the table to forge a bi-partisan reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

Since its passage in 1994, Congress has continued to invest in our nation’s most robust federal response to addressing violence against women in a coordinated community-based approach. Inclusive of law enforcement, prosecutors, the courts, and victim services, VAWA funds innovation and direct services in response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

Last year alone, Texas utilized $8.8 million in VAWA funding. This federal leadership and funding fostered safety for the 11,833 adult victims and 14,578 children that sought shelter from domestic violence programs in fiscal year 2011. Rape crisis centers used VAWA and other funding to serve victims by answering nearly 34,000 sexual assault hotline calls to Texas rape crisis centers and serving more than 15,000 sexual assault victims through support groups.

“Failure in negotiating a bi-partisan reauthorization cannot be an option,” said Gloria A. Terry, President of the Texas Council on Family Violence. “Senator Cornyn and Senator Hutchison have supported VAWA reauthorization during their entire time in office and we thank them.” Annette Burrhus-Clay, Executive Director of TAASA added, “Moreover, their support for safeguarding federal funding has allowed for level funding and modest increases even in light of challenging fiscal realities.”
TCFV and TAASA encourage Cornyn and Hutchison and all members of Congress to continue supporting VAWA during this reauthorization by working with their Senate colleagues in a manner the separates VAWA from Washington politics. Texas victims of domestic violence, dating violence sexual assault, and stalking look to their Senators for this leadership.

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The **Texas Council on Family Violence** (TCFV), formed in 1978, is one of the largest domestic violence coalitions in the nation. TCFV promotes safe and healthy relationships by supporting service providers, facilitating strategic prevention efforts, and creating opportunities for freedom from domestic violence. [www.tcfv.org](http://www.tcfv.org)

The **Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA)** is the statewide organization committed to ending sexual violence in Texas. A non-profit educational and advocacy organization based in Austin, TAASA member agencies comprise a statewide network of more than 80 crisis centers that serve rural as well as metropolitan areas. Founded in 1982, the agency has a strong record of success in community education, legal services, youth outreach, law enforcement training, legislative advocacy, and curricula and materials development. Additional information about TAASA can be found at [www.taasa.org](http://www.taasa.org)