

Laurel G. Bellows  
President

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January 30, 2013

The Honorable John Conyers  
2426 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gwen Moore  
2245 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Conyers and Moore:

On behalf of the American Bar Association (ABA), with nearly 400,000 members across the country, I write to commend your continued leadership in the cause of justice and equal rights with the introduction of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013. The ABA strongly supports your effort to renew proven and effective programs that support victims of domestic, sexual, stalking and dating violence and their families.

The ABA has long supported efforts to address domestic, sexual and stalking violence, and we recognize that the legal profession fulfills an important role in addressing these crimes. Since 1994, the ABA's Commission on Domestic & Sexual Violence has also worked to increase access to justice for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking by mobilizing the legal profession.

In recent years, the ABA has adopted policies that specifically address VAWA reauthorization, including some of the more challenging issues that ultimately proved to be barriers to reauthorization during the last Congress:

- February 2010: urging reauthorization and highlighting the need for legislation that “provides services, protection, and justice for underserved and vulnerable victims of violence, including children and youth who are victims or are witnesses to family violence, and victims who are disabled, elderly, immigrant, trafficked, LGBT and/or Indian.”
- August 2012: urging Congress “to strengthen tribal jurisdiction to address crimes of gender-based violence on tribal lands that are committed by non-Indian perpetrators.”

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VAWA reauthorization was a legislative priority for the association during the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress and a focus of our annual grassroots lobbying event, ABA Day 2012, when ABA, state, local, and specialty bar leaders from all 50 states met with members of Congress of both parties on this issue.

VAWA reauthorization remains a priority for the American Bar Association during the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress. We appreciate your leadership and look forward to working with you to ensure passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurel G. Bellows". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and 'B'.

Laurel G. Bellows