



December 3, 2014

Dear Representative,

The Steering Committee of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence (“NTF”), comprised of national leadership organizations advocating on behalf of sexual and domestic violence victims and women’s rights, writes in opposition to Congressman Yoho’s amendment to H.R. 5759, which seriously limits Executive Branch authority to defer the removal of various classes of non-citizens. The amendment broadly sweeps large numbers of victims into its scope and ignores the best interests of victims and their children.

This fall we are celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the bipartisan Violence Against Women Act (“VAWA”), which has, since it was first enacted, included critical protections for immigrant victims of domestic and sexual violence. Congressman Yoho’s amendment undermines protections from removal for victims of domestic and sexual violence, dating violence, stalking, trafficking, and child abuse, and undermines the purpose and spirit of VAWA.

For example, over the last twenty years, victims have benefitted from executive action deferring removal, enhancing their safety and ability to recover from abuse, under both Republican and Democratic administrations. These include spouses and children of abusive U.S. Citizens and Permanent Residents, with approved petitions under the Violence Against Women Act, who are awaiting the availability of immigrant visas. In addition, non-citizens eligible for crime-victim visas based on certification from criminal legal system officials have benefitted from executive branch deferral from removal, enhancing victims’ ability to participate in holding offenders accountable. For these reasons, we oppose the broad restrictions on executive action deferring removal of classes of non-citizens included in Congressman Yoho’s amendments to H.R. 5759.

We strongly urge members to prioritize the needs of immigrant survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, trafficking, and child abuse, and reject these amendments. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us for further information through Grace Huang at grace@wscadv.org, or (206) 389-2515 x 209.

Sincerely,

The member organizations of The National Taskforce to End Sexual and Domestic Violence
www.4vawa.org