



May 7, 2012

The Honorable Lamar Smith, Chairman  
The Honorable John Conyers, Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**Oppose H.R. 4970, Which Fails to Protect All Victims of Domestic Violence**

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Conyers:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 210 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, we urge you to oppose H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, as it fails to protect all victims of domestic violence and weakens current legal protections.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which was adopted in the Senate with strong bipartisan support, addresses gaps in current service programs that left lesbian, gay, transgendered, immigrant and Native women and men without vital services or protections. The need to address these gaps has been recognized by law enforcement officers, victim service providers, and health care professionals. H.R. 4970 eliminates these important provisions, thereby denying services to many victims of domestic violence. For example, despite the well-documented unacceptably high rates of domestic violence on tribal lands, H.R. 4970 eliminates provisions that would make it easier for Native women to obtain orders of protection from their abusers. In addition, H.R. 4970 drops all the provisions that would ensure access to services for LGBTQ survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence. Finally, H.R. 4970 rolls back current law on confidentiality, making it more risky for immigrant victims to seek help from the police and thus imperiling their safety and survival.

Every battered person deserves protection, regardless of the race, sex, sexual orientation or immigrant status of the abused. The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights opposes H.R. 4970 because it fails to provide services and protection for all victims. Therefore, we urge all members of the Judiciary Committee to oppose the bill. Instead, we urge you to support a VAWA reauthorization resembling the bipartisan Senate-passed bill that provides needed protections for all who suffer domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions please feel free to contact June Zeitlin at 202-263-2852 or [zeitlin@civilrights.org](mailto:zeitlin@civilrights.org)

Sincerely,

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