



OFFICE OF PUBLIC WITNESS • PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)
COMPASSION, PEACE AND JUSTICE MINISTRY

February 1, 2013

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), we believe that “domestic violence is always a violation of the power God intended for good.” We believe that “God the Creator is preeminently a covenant-maker, the One who creates, sustains, and transforms the people of God. Domestic violence and abuse destroys covenants in which people have promised to treat each other with respect and dignity.”*

Because of these convictions, we strongly support a robust reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act and we thank you for your leadership in sponsoring S. 47. Further, we wish you to know that we have written to all of your Senate colleagues, asking them to support final passage of this bill, and urging them to oppose any amendments that you have not endorsed.

As you know, VAWA’s programs support state, tribal, and local efforts to address the pervasive and insidious crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. These programs have made great progress towards reducing the violence, helping victims to be healthy and feel safe and holding perpetrators accountable. This critical legislation must be reauthorized to ensure a continued response to these crimes.

Again, **we thank you for your leadership on this important issue and look forward to the bill’s passage**, so that we can build upon VAWA's successes and continue to enhance our nation’s ability to promote an end to this violence, to hold perpetrators accountable, and to keep victims and their families safe from future harm. For our part, we commit to continued ministry with victims and survivors of violence and to do all we can, through our ministries and our advocacy, to end this desperate cycle of violence and brokenness.

We give thanks for your service to our nation and for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Herbert Nelson, II".

The Reverend J. Herbert Nelson, II
Director for Public Witness

* Belief statements are quoted from *Turn Mourning Into Dancing! A Policy Statement on Healing Domestic Violence*, approved by the 213th General Assembly (2001) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)