



May 3, 2012

PROTECTING IMMIGRANT WOMEN AND GIRLS FLEEING VIOLENCE

The House of Representatives is Taking Up VAWA's Reauthorization Next Week – Contact Your Representative NOW to Keep Current Protections for Immigrant Survivors from Being Gutted!

Reps. Adams and Cantor have just introduced a new bill in the House of Representatives to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) (HR 4970). HR 4970 puts steep new hurdles to eligibility in the path of immigrant survivors seeking protection under VAWA; radically changes the current application processes so as to increase batterers' ability to threaten and intimidate their victims into silence; and lacks needed provisions to ensure full implementation and enforcement of the International Marriage Broker Regulation Act (IMBRA).

Contact your Representative TODAY to urge them to [1] reject any bill that guts protections for immigrant survivors, and [2] to ensure that the House VAWA bill includes all IMBRA-related provisions that passed in the Senate (S. 1925)! For more information on VAWA and suggested talking points for outreach, please visit 4vawa.org.

Read below for Tahirih's press release applauding Senate passage of a positive bill to reauthorize VAWA, and for background on Tahirih's leadership role on IMBRA:

***Tahirih Justice Center Applauds Senate Passage of Bill to Reauthorize VAWA
Legislation including Key Provisions to Prevent Abuse and Exploitation
through International Marriage Brokers***

April 27, 2012 (Washington, DC) - Today the Tahirih Justice Center applauds the United States Senate for bipartisan passage of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (S. 1925), which includes provisions critical to strengthening the International Marriage Broker Regulation Act of 2005.

Tahirih Executive Director Layli Miller-Muro stated: "VAWA's reauthorization by Congress will help protect the rights of thousands of women and children from abusers. The International Marriage Broker (IMB) provisions in VAWA are critical to cleaning up the shady industry of 'mail-order brides.'" The IMB provisions will enhance US law enforcers' ability to prosecute violations of the International Marriage Broker Regulation Act (IMBRA) of 2005.

Ms. Miller-Muro added: "We particularly thank Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Michael Crapo (R-ID) for their bipartisan leadership as original co-sponsors of S. 1925, and Tahirih's "home state" Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Mark Warner (D-VA), Jim Webb (D-VA), and Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) for voting in favor of S. 1925 and its vital protections for victims. We also thank Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) for championing IMBRA provisions to close dangerous gaps in enforcement. We look forward to working with all their counterparts in the US House of Representatives to bring about swift passage of the legislation. To the women trapped with abusive men they met through "mail-order-bride" agencies: American lawmakers have heard you. The Senate's bipartisan action sends an unequivocal message that abuse of women will not be tolerated; violators will be brought to justice."

Amendments in "VAWA 2011" (S. 1925) make technical corrections and close gaps in IMBRA to enable Congress' protective intent in enacting the law to be realized. Among other things, these amendments:

- Require the Attorney General to designate a particular office to be responsible for bringing civil and criminal enforcement actions against

- IMBs that violate IMBRA;
- Clarify the culpability standard and level of penalties that apply to particular types of violations, and create a way to differentiate the most serious violations;
- Require IMBs to keep records of their compliance with IMBRA's prohibition on marketing children, and clarify other IMB obligations re: background checks and disclosures;
- Require disclosures of additional violent history information by US clients of IMBs, and by US petitioners during the fiancé(e)/spouse visa application process, and ensure that the US government's background check on those US visa petitioners includes a search of the FBI's NCIC Protection Order Database; and
- Penalize US clients of IMBs for lying about or withholding their criminal or violent history information.

The International Marriage Broker Regulation Act (IMBRA) was passed as part of the 2005 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and signed into law by President Bush on January 5, 2006. IMBRA was motivated by alarming evidence of a growing nationwide trend of abuse and exploitation of foreign women who meet American husbands through international marriage brokers (IMBs) (so-called "mail-order bride" agencies). In an effort to prevent future tragedies, IMBRA imposed commonsense regulations on IMBs and made critical changes to the process by which American citizens petition to sponsor foreign fiancé(e) or spouse visas. The Tahirih Justice Center helped draft IMBRA and mobilized a broad-based bipartisan national coalition to advocate for its passage. Since IMBRA's enactment, Tahirih has pressed for IMBRA's full implementation and effective enforcement, including through the amendments included in S. 1925.

The Tahirih Justice Center is a national legal defense organization protecting women and girls fleeing human rights abuses through public policy advocacy and direct services. www.tahirih.org

Tahirih Justice Center · www.tahirih.org · justice@tahirih.org

To hear about our successes and learn more about our challenges,
join Tahirih on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Washington, DC Area · 6402 Arlington Blvd, Suite 300, Falls Church, VA 22042
571-282-6161 · 571-282-6162 (f) · TTY: 711

Houston, TX · 1717 St. James Place, Suite 320, Houston, TX 77056
713-496-0100 · 713-481-1793 · houston@tahirih.org

Baltimore, MD

[View this message in your internet browser](#)

[Forward this message](#)

[Unsubscribe or change email preferences](#)

