

May 14, 2012

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eric Cantor
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
303 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 50515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Minority Whip
U.S. House of Representatives
1705 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 50515

Dear Speaker Boehner, Minority Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader Cantor, and Minority Whip Hoyer:

We, the undersigned organizations, represent millions of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and the professionals who serve them, throughout the United States and territories. **We would like to express our strong opposition to H.R. 4970, the bill introduced by Rep. Sandy Adams (R-FL) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).**

As you know, Congress has recognized the severity of violence against women and our need for a national strategy since the enactment of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994. Over the last 18 years, this landmark federal law's comprehensive approach to violence against women has had dramatic results. VAWA funds are used to:

- Train over 500,000 law enforcement personnel every year,
- Support sexual assault services in every state; when victims receive advocate-assisted services following assaults, rape survivors are 59 percent more likely to have police reports taken than survivors without advocates whose reports are only taken 41 percent of the time, and
- Support programs that reduce domestic violence homicides; as an example, between 1993 and 2007, the rate of intimate partner homicides of females decreased by 35 percent and the rate of intimate partner homicides of males decreased 46 percent.

We all support a strong, bipartisan VAWA reauthorization bill similar to what the Senate passed last month, which would continue the life-saving protections and services needed by victims and their families. Again, H.R. 4970, which recently passed out of the House Judiciary Committee by a near party-line vote, would be a rollback of years of progress and likely increase the number of women and children who could be hurt. While we respect Congresswoman Adams' personal commitment to the issue of violence against women and girls, we must oppose her harmful bill. H.R. 4970 is genuinely dangerous for immigrant women and their families. It includes damaging provisions that create obstacles for immigrant victims to report crimes, increases danger for immigrant victims by eliminating important confidentiality protections, and undermines effective anti-fraud protections that exist in current law.

While embracing many elements of the bipartisan reauthorization that recently passed the Senate, the bill excludes key improvements that were included in the Senate reauthorization. It

expressly rejects protections for men and women who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender and eliminates strong protections and justice for women and children who are beaten or abused on Tribal lands by perpetrators who are not members of a particular tribe. And it removes a key requirement that would more easily allow victims to move from one subsidized housing program to another in order to avoid an abuser and drops an important provision that would tackle the violence that occurs on our nation's college campuses.

We respectfully request that you reconsider advancing this legislation and instead focus on developing a bipartisan bill modeled after H.R. 4271, the companion bill to the Senate-passed version of VAWA.

Thank you for your past efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women and children. We look forward to working with you to craft a bill that works to protect all victims and directs resources to this urgent task in the most effective way possible.

Sincerely,

9to5, National Association of Working Women
A New Hope Center, Inc.
Advocates for Youth
African Services Committee
Akiak Native Community
Alianza--National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence
AAUW
American Federation of Teachers
American Red Cross Rape Crisis Services
Americans for Immigrant Justice
Amnesty International USA
Asian and Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence
ASISTA Immigration Assistance
Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP)
Battered Women's Legal Advocacy Project
Black Women's Health Imperative
Break the Cycle
Business and Professional Women's Foundation
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities
Center for Legal and Social Justice
Charging Buffalo Society
Children's Civil Rights Union
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Coalition on Human Needs
Compass Rape Crisis & Counseling Center
Covenant House International
Cumbee Center to Assist Abused Persons
Domestic Violence Alternatives/Sexual Assault Center
Domestic Violence Legal Empowerment and Appeals Project
End Violence Against Women International

Enlace Comunitario
Farmworker Justice
Feminist Majority Foundation
Forensic Healthcare Consulting
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Futures Without Violence, formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund
Global Workers Justice Alliance
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)
Holistic Living Project
Human Rights Campaign
Immigrant Ability
INCourage, Advocacy Beyond Purpose
Indian Law Resource Center
Indigenous Women's Justice Institute
International Institute of Buffalo
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Federations of North America
Jewish Labor Committee
Jewish Women International
Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs (JACPAC)
Justice & Mercy Legal Aid Clinic
L.U.N.A
La Casa de las Madres
La Esperanza
La Mariposa Enterprises
Latin American Association
Latinas Unidas Por Un Nuevo Amanecer
Legal Momentum
Manavi
Media Equity Collaborative
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
Mental Health America of Licking County
MESA
Mosaic Family Services
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Association of Human Rights Workers
National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Center for Victims of Crime
National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence
National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc.
National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs

National Congress of American Indians
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Women's Organizations
National Domestic Violence Hotline
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
National Legal Aid & Defender Association
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS)
National Organization for Women
National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
National Women's Conference Committee
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
Native Women's Coalition
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Paso Del Norte Civil Rights Project
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Rape Victim Advocates
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Redwood Justice Fund
Refugio del Rio Grande, Inc.
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Rural Women's Health Project
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Share Time Wisely Consulting Services
Sisters of Mercy Institute Justice Team
Stop Abuse Campaign
Tahirih Justice Center
The Domestic Violence Action Center
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
The Legal Project
The NAACP
Time To Tell
Tiyospaye Winyan Maka
Turning Anger into Change
UNANIMA International
UnidosNow
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Church of Christ

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society
United South and Eastern Tribes
Uniting Three Fires Against Violence
UNO Immigration Ministry
Urban Justice Center
Vera House, Inc.
Victim Rights Law Center
Victims Services of Behavioral Connections
VOICE MALE Magazine
Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii
Wider Opportunities for Women
Women Against Abuse
Women for Genuine Security
Women in Federal Law Enforcement, Inc.
Women of Color Network
Women of Reform Judaism
Women's Law Project
YWCA USA