



**National Alliance to  
End Sexual Violence**

March 4, 2021

The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee  
U.S House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick  
U.S House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Jackson Lee and Fitzpatrick,

On behalf of the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV) representing 56 state and territorial sexual assault coalitions and more than 1500 local rape crisis centers, I am writing to convey our wholehearted support for the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2021 reauthorizing and improving the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and our gratitude for your willingness to move forward to ensure we renew VAWA as swiftly as possible.

With each iteration of VAWA, Congress goes the next step to address the needs of survivors and communities. Based on extensive conversations with local programs and advocates, we brought forward several key enhancements, and we are very pleased that your legislation includes many of these. From an increased investment in sexual violence services and prevention programs and culturally specific organizations that serve communities of color to provisions to hold offenders accountable on tribal lands to efforts to make our criminal justice system more responsive to the needs of victims, this legislation includes the realistic policies our programs need to do their jobs.

According to the [National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey](#), one in five women has been the victim of rape or attempted rape. Nearly one in two women has experienced some form of sexual violence and one in five men has experienced a form of sexual violence other than rape in their lifetime. The study confirmed that the impacts on society are enormous. Over 80% of women who were victimized experienced significant short and long-term impacts related to the violence such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), injury (42%) and missed time at work or school (28%). The CDC report shows that most rape and partner violence is experienced before the age of 24, highlighting the importance of preventing this violence before it occurs.

High profile cases of sexual assault on campuses, our military bases, military academies, and professional sports have resulted in unprecedented media attention. This has also resulted in a

tremendous increase in sexual assault survivors seeking assistance from local rape crisis centers and educators as well as community organizations requesting prevention and training services. The media attention also points to the need for comprehensive community responses to sexual violence. According to data from a [2020 survey conducted by NAESV](#), 62% of local sexual assault programs have a waiting list, sometimes months long, for counseling services and 35% lack a full time sexual assault therapist on staff.

For these reasons, we are incredibly grateful that your legislation increases the authorizations for the Sexual Assault Services Program and the Rape Prevention and Education Program. The local programs in our network see every day the widespread and devastating consequences of sexual violence, and this additional funding will help them respond to community requests for services and prevention education.

Of deep concern to NAESV, tribal governments are currently unable to prosecute crimes of sexual assault, trafficking, child abuse, and stalking by non-native offenders on their lands. A 2016 study from the National Institute for Justice (NIJ), found that approximately 56% of Native women experience sexual violence within their lifetime, with 1 in 7 experiencing it in the past year. Nearly 1 in 2 report being stalked. Contrary to the general population where rape, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence are usually *intra*-racial, Native women are more likely to be raped or assaulted by someone of a different race. 96% of Native women and 89% of male victims in the NIJ study reported being victimized by a non-Indian. Native victims of sexual violence are three times as likely to have experienced sexual violence by an interracial perpetrator as non-Hispanic White victims. Similarly, Native stalking victims are nearly 4 times as likely to be stalked by someone of a different race, with 89% of female stalking victims and 90% of male stalking victims reporting inter-racial victimization. The higher rate of inter-racial violence would not necessarily be significant if it were not for the jurisdictional complexities unique to Indian Country and the limitations imposed by federal law on tribal authority to hold non-Indians accountable for crimes they commit on tribal lands.

We stand with you in affirming tribes' sovereignty to prosecute non-native offenders of sexual assault, child abuse, trafficking and stalking. VAWA 2013 restored the authority of Tribes to arrest and prosecute offenders, regardless of their race, for acts of domestic violence committed within the boundaries of their jurisdiction. Since enactment, at least 16 Tribes have undertaken the steps to exercise the special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction (SDVCJ) restored by VAWA 2013 – leading to over 120 arrests. Tribal victims deserve justice, and we fully support these provisions.

Many survivors of sexual assault, abuse, and harassment have housing needs. For some survivors, home may not be a safe place and they may need to leave due to sexual violence they are experiencing in their home that is perpetrated by a household member, landlord, or neighbor. Other survivors may need to find safe housing to heal and lessen the effects of sexual violence they have experienced either in their home or they may need to find new housing if the perpetrator knows where they live to stay safe. VAWA includes important protections for

survivors of sexual assault in public housing, and these provisions are a critical part of the safety net for survivors.

We are very pleased to support your vital legislation that moves us forward in our work to end sexual violence. Please contact our Policy Director, Terri Poore, [terri@endsexualviolence.org](mailto:terri@endsexualviolence.org), with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monika Johnson Hostler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Monika Johnson Hostler  
President