

Letter to House Leadership Demands Immediate Action

WASHINGTON – A bipartisan coalition today called for immediate reauthorization of an inclusive and comprehensive Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Led by Representatives Louise M. Slaughter (NY-28), Judy Biggert (IL-13), Gwen Moore (WI-4), Mike Quigley (IL-5), John Conyers (MI-14) and Richard Hanna (NY-24), 120 Members of Congress sent a letter to House Leadership calling for reauthorization legislation similar to the bill already passed in the Senate.

The letter was sent to Speaker of the House John Boehner, Majority Leader Eric Cantor, Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer. In part, the letter reads, “We write today asking you to move quickly on the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) by bringing a bill inclusive of protections for all victims of domestic violence, similar to that which has already passed the Senate, to the House floor for a vote during these final weeks of the 112th Congress. The Violence Against Women Act is crucial for the victims of domestic violence and those agencies and organizations who serve them. We must send the President a strong, bipartisan bill that protects all those vulnerable to domestic violence.”

[To read the entire letter, click here.](#)

VAWA was first signed into law in 1994, and has been reauthorized on a bipartisan basis twice since then. Since its enactment, cases of domestic violence have fallen by 67 percent, and more than 1 million women have used the justice system to obtain protective orders against their batterers.

“Today’s bipartisan letter should be a clear sign,” said Slaughter. “Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle want to vote on an inclusive and comprehensive renewal of the Violence Against Women Act. It’s time that the leaders of the House bring such a bill to the floor for a vote.”

“The reauthorization of VAWA should reflect what we have learned over the years – that anyone

can be a victim of domestic violence,” said Biggert. “Victims of domestic violence and rape have been through enough tragedy and we cannot allow these life-saving programs to languish any longer. We must move quickly to send the President a VAWA bill that ensures every victim can get the help they need, including LGBT individuals, immigrants, college students, and individuals who live on Native American reservations.”

Said Moore, “I am pleased to join this group of bipartisan colleagues urging quick passage of a strong VAWA, like the bill passed by the Senate, that covers all victims of violence. Since 1994, the Violence Against Women Act has made a meaningful difference in the lives of countless victims and their families. We are so close to final passage but our work is not yet done. We must forge ahead to help support all victims of domestic violence.”

“Congress has always been able to come together in a bipartisan effort to protect victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. This year should be no different,” said Quigley. “Every day we wait to reauthorize a comprehensive Violence Against Women Act is a day another victim lacks life-saving protections. Now is the time for members on both sides of the aisle to set aside politics and join together for the sake of victims everywhere to pass an inclusive VAWA.”

“I urge the House leadership to bring an inclusive Violence Against Women Act reauthorization to the House Floor as soon as possible. We simply cannot let politics get in the way of aid for victims,” said Conyers.

“If a daughter, sister or perfect stranger was raped, battered or needed help no one would ask or care what her ethnicity, national origin or orientation was before we came to her aid – nor should the Violence Against Women Act,” U.S. Rep. Richard Hanna said. “We would simply make sure she had all the resources to recover and find justice as quickly as possible. No community, and no person, should be neglected when it comes to domestic violence. Let us pass a bipartisan, inclusive Violence Against Women Act that service providers, law enforcement and most importantly – all victims – deserve.”