

Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules, submitted the following statement into the record on the introduction of the House Resolution to recognize the fifteenth anniversary of the anniversary of the enactment of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994.

M. Speaker, I am proud today to introduce H.Res. 738 to recognize the accomplishments we have made in the fight to end violence against women in the United States in the fifteen years since President Clinton signed the Violence Against Women Act into law on September 13, 1994 as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. This recognized the severity of the crimes associated with domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking, we have made great progress.

In 1993, a woman was raped every six seconds in the United States and a female was beaten every 15 seconds.

In July 1994, there were three times as many animal shelters in the United States as battered women shelters.

No doubt about it – the Violence Against Women Act has vastly improved access to support and care to women and families who are victims of domestic violence and stalking.

During a time, when women were still considered secondary to men, my colleagues of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues and I battled to explain the importance of protecting women from the horrors of violence and abuse.

In the House, I worked with former Representatives Patricia Schroeder, Constance Morella and now Senators Olympia J. Snowe, and Barbara Boxer and Chuck Schumer to author the Violence Against Women Act. In the Senate, Vice President Biden, then the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, championed the Senate version of VAWA.

The 1994 bill was a watershed, marking the first comprehensive legislative package designed to end violence against women. The protections and provisions afforded by the 1994 law were subsequently expanded and improved in the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 and the

Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005.

VAWA has led to the reduction of domestic violence incidents reported. By reducing the need for emergency and medical responses, VAWA has averted more than \$14 billion dollars in societal costs as VAWA-funded interventions have lowered domestic violence frequency and sexual assault rates.

VAWA has succeeded in bringing communities together to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Prior to VAWA, few helping systems in a community addressed these crimes. Now law enforcement, prosecution, the courts, victim services and community based programs work together on the grassroots and statewide levels to develop long-term plans for addressing the crimes. VAWA has brought innovative practices to the field by funding demonstration projects, trainings, and supporting the development of specialized courts and police teams.

The Sexual Assault Services Program, created in VAWA 2005, enabled the country's 1300 rape crisis centers to reduce waiting lists, reach out to underserved communities, and provide more comprehensive services to survivors of sexual assault across the nation.

Since 1997, VAWA has funded the Sexual Assault Coalition Resource Sharing Project (RSP) to develop and strengthen state and territorial sexual assault coalitions. In 1997, there were only 26 states with either no coalition or a coalition with no paid staff. Through VAWA and the efforts of the RSP in 2009 all 50 states and 5 territories have sexual assault or dual issue sexual assault/domestic violence coalitions in place.

During the last fifteen years, the National Center for Victims of Crime has witnessed dramatic improvement in the way our nation responds to stalking cases, progress greatly owed to the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). By including stalking in the original landmark bill, Congress elevated this crime in our nation's consciousness and highlighted it as a serious offense requiring heightened attention.

With VAWA funding, the National Center for Victims of Crime created the Stalking Resource Center raise national awareness of stalking and to encourage the development and implementation of multidisciplinary responses to stalking in local communities across the

country. VAWA has also provided crucial federal support for efforts by criminal justice officials and victim service providers to hold offenders accountable and to keep stalking victims safe.

VAWA has supported the Stalking Resource Centers work to create a model stalking code that will serve as a guide for lawmakers' initiatives to update their states' stalking laws to keep pace with an ever-changing, and has enabled the SRC to train over 30,000 multidisciplinary professionals across the country who work with and respond to stalking victims, better equipping them to respond to the crime of stalking.

I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring the fifteen anniversary of the signing of VAWA which took place on September 13, 1994 while recognizing the accomplishments we have made and the continuing commitment in the fight to end violence against women.