

June 1, 2012

Dear Senator:

As a diverse coalition of immigration, faith, labor, civil rights, human rights, and community organizations serving and advocating on behalf of immigrant victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, and other forms of violence, we thank you for your continuing efforts to ensure final passage of a bipartisan reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) that furthers the long-standing aims of VAWA to protect victims of violence.

VAWA has a long history of uniting lawmakers with the common purpose of protecting survivors of domestic violence. First enacted in 1994, Congress has reauthorized the law in 2000 and 2005, each time with broad, bipartisan support. Over the years, Congress has consistently recognized the vulnerability of noncitizen victims of violence and has therefore enacted provisions in VAWA that enhance safety for victims and their children and provide important tools for law enforcement to investigate and prosecute crimes.

Two weeks ago, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4970, a VAWA reauthorization bill, by a narrow margin of 222-205. Unfortunately, H.R. 4970 would undermine years of bipartisan progress of advancing protections for immigrant victims. Some of H.R. 4970's provisions would actually make immigrants more vulnerable and could endanger their lives.

With your support, in April the Senate passed its own VAWA reauthorization bill, S. 1925, by a vote of 68-31. Though S. 1925 is not perfect, the purpose of VAWA to ensure the protection and safety of victims of violence would be far better served if a final bill adheres more closely to the bipartisan Senate bill. To accomplish this goal, we also ask that Sections 801, 802, 806, and 814 of H.R. 4970 and Section 1008 of S. 1925 be removed during conference.

Each year VAWA laws and programs support thousands of women, children, and others who fall victim to domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking. As the legislative process moves forward to reconcile the two different VAWA proposals, we urge you to oppose provisions that would eliminate or roll back protections for vulnerable immigrant victims.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Survivors of Torture and Trauma  
African Services Committee  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)  
American Immigration Lawyers Association  
American Jewish Committee  
Americans for Immigrant Justice

Amnesty International USA  
Arkansas Interfaith Alliance  
ASHA for Women  
Asian American Institute, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice  
Asian American Justice Center, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice  
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance  
Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice  
Asian Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence  
Boston New Sanctuary Movement  
Boston University Civil Litigation Program  
Cardozo Human Rights and Genocide Clinic  
Casa de Esperanza: National Latino@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities  
Casa Esperanza  
Center for Gender and Refugee Studies, Hastings College of the Law  
Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc.  
Center for Social Justice, Seton Hall University School of Law  
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers  
Refugee and Immigration Ministries, Disciples Home Mission, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Church World Service, Immigration and Refugee Program  
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice Santa Barbara  
Disciples Home Missions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Disciples Justice Action Network  
DREAM Activist Virginia  
Families for Freedom  
Farmworker Justice  
Florida Coastal Immigrant Rights Clinic  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Futures Without Violence  
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society  
Hutto Visitation Program  
Human Rights Defense Center  
Human Rights Watch  
Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota  
Immigration Center for Women and Children  
Immigration Equality Action Fund  
Indo-American Center  
Institute on Domestic Violence in the African-American Community  
Jesuit Social Research Institute, Loyola University New Orleans  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Jewish Women International  
Legal Momentum  
Legal Services of New Jersey  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Mai Family Services  
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office  
Mercy Investment Services  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence  
National Asian Pacific Bar Association  
National Black Justice Coalition  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Center for Victims of Crime  
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
National Coalition for LGBT Health  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council of La Raza  
National Employment Law Project  
National Immigrant Justice Center  
National Immigration Forum  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National Network to End Domestic Violence  
National Organization for Women  
National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault  
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence  
NC DREAM Team  
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project  
One Love Movement  
Political Asylum Immigration Representation Project  
Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network  
Rural Organizing Project  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S.  
Sisters of Mercy Institute Justice Team  
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Justice Team  
Sojourners  
South Asian Americans Leading Together  
South Asian Network  
Tahirih Justice Center  
Texans United for Families  
The Episcopal Church  
The Kansas/Missouri Dream Alliance  
The National Council of the Churches of Christ of the USA  
The Reformed Church of Highland Park  
The Washington Defender Association's Immigration Project  
The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
The Women of Color Network  
UC Davis Immigration Law Clinic  
Union for Reform Judaism

United Church of Christ (Justice & Witness Ministries)  
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society  
United Sikhs  
United We Dream  
Who Is My Neighbor? Inc.  
Women for Reformed Judaism  
Women Watch Afrika  
Women's Refugee Commission  
YWCA USA