

THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA): A TOOLKIT FOR EDUCATING POLICY MAKERS ABOUT REAUTHORIZATION

Produced by

**The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic
Violence, Toolkit Subcommittee**

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The National Task Force gratefully acknowledges the work of Futures Without Violence and its ENGAGING WITH FEDERAL POLICY TO BETTER ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A TOOLKIT FOR ACTIVISTS created through a grant by the California Endowment and other funders.

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USING THE TOOLKIT

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), first passed in 1994, provides a lifeline for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. VAWA expires in 2018 and must be swiftly reauthorized to ensure a continued federal response to these crimes. The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence has developed this VAWA reauthorization education and awareness toolkit in order to aid *you* – the experts, leaders, and advocates – in educating federal policymakers about the needs of survivors of violence and why the reauthorization of VAWA is critical to meeting these needs. This toolkit focuses on the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), but many of the elements can be used for any federal, local or state policy effort.

Local advocacy is critically important to ensuring that VAWA is reauthorized with key improvements, discussed in detail below, that will enhance essential prevention and intervention services for women, men and children who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. As you know, VAWA has provided life-saving assistance to hundreds of thousands of women and men since

it was first passed almost 24 years ago and dramatically improved the way that law enforcement and courts respond to these crimes. VAWA continues to have an important impact in local communities throughout the country.

It is our hope that this toolkit will help you utilize your time and resources most effectively, while giving you the information necessary to be an effective advocate. We hope that whether you are part of a nonprofit organization, talking with a friend one-on-one, or meeting with an elected official, this toolkit will provide you with the resources to accomplish your policy goals.

In the following pages, you will find information on how to effectively engage policymakers and members of the media and an action plan to help keep you on track in your advocacy efforts. The appendices include a list of resources and more detailed sample materials and information.

Another resource for you is the NTF website, www.4vawa.org. Check back often to this site for bill-specific action alerts as Members of Congress draft the legislation!

As you move forward in your advocacy efforts, we strongly encourage you to network and share ideas with local partners to develop ways to work in concert to make change happen. You are the experts and leaders capable of influencing others to prevent and end violence and abuse.

As we work to coordinate advocacy efforts in Washington, DC, we look forward to updates on your local advocacy efforts. Please send updates to: NTF4VAWA@gmail.com.

Thank you for your ongoing advocacy on these important issues.

OVERVIEW

Public policy advocacy is an effort by individuals, organized groups, paid advocates, and lobbyists to change laws, policies and/or regulations at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels. Advocacy activities can range from calling, meeting with or writing to an elected official as well as holding a march or rally. Advocacy includes any activity with a purpose of influencing legislation, public funding, regulations or the actions of government officials.

This toolkit will provide you with the tools to inform and educate federal legislators and decision-makers to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

VAWA was first passed in 1994 and has since been reauthorized three times, most recently in 2013. It is due to be reauthorized again in 2018. Several VAWA programs focus on developing a coordinated community response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Some VAWA programs are targeted to address a particular service need, such as transitional housing or civil legal assistance, and some programs are designed to address the needs of particular populations. VAWA is the largest and best-known law addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

VAWA has had a significant impact on ending violence. Since its initial authorization in 1994, reporting of domestic violence has increased as much as 51% and all states have passed laws making stalking a crime and have strengthened rape laws. The number of individuals killed by an intimate partner has decreased by 34% for women and 57% for men. Overall, VAWA saved \$12.6 billion in its first six years alone.

Fact sheets are powerful tools to persuade decisions makers because they contain so much information in just a few pages. The below fact sheets were created by the National Task Force and will be helpful in educating legislators, community members and other constituencies.

Fact Sheet	Purpose	Appendix	Download Link
The Critical Role of VAWA: Services to Victims and their Families	Provides information on how VAWA aids victims and families	A	Click Here
The Critical Role of VAWA: Strengthening the Legal System's Response	Highlights the ways VAWA improves system responses	B	Click Here

Dating Violence Overview	Overview of dating violence statistics	C	Click Here
Rape Prevention & Education Program	Provides details on successes and specific ask for increase	D	Click Here

Overview

REACHING OUT TO POLICYMAKERS

Why Engage with Federal Policymakers?

Federal policymakers have an impact on specific federal policy legislation and funding for programs and services. The potential to do good on a large scale is enormous. Most importantly, as their voting constituents, Members of Congress are especially receptive to hearing from you. They want to know what the needs are within their particular district and state, and you are able to provide that information and connect these issues to their home areas. It is also important to remember that people who don't share our goals and vision will be trying to influence policymakers to oppose or undermine our efforts. We need to make our voices heard, too. This section of the toolkit, along with the following media and community sections, is designed to help you effectively discuss what is working and not working within VAWA, and articulate answers for a federal policymaker in 15 minutes or less to the following questions:

- What is the problem their constituents are facing and how does it link to VAWA?
- How has VAWA positively impacted your community? What progress still needs to be made?
- How will supporting the next VAWA support their constituents and their needs?

How to Successfully Engage Policymakers

Work With Partners

As an individual advocate, you have a powerful voice, but it is important that you network and share ideas with local partners, so they can help you achieve your mutual goals. Grassroots organizing is essential to any legislative process. Join together with local victim service providers and partners in your community, including your state domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions. Don't forget that you have allies in the women's, civil rights, anti-poverty, union, religious and education communities. Join their efforts or develop a Take Action initiative together. Discuss what's working and not working in your community, share ideas on best practices and develop ways to work in concert to achieve a result in your community. Many state domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions actively reach out to their Members of Congress and will be able to provide valuable background information and materials for your coordinated advocacy efforts.

Educate Yourself

There are many resources that can help you become a more effective advocate. At the end of this toolkit is a list of organizations that can provide you with timely policy materials and news. Sign up for email alerts and newsletters. Learn who can help with your issue. You may want to start with your local Member of Congress or work through local, tribal, state, or national partners to reach Members of Congress that share your particular interest. As an example, one Member of Congress may have introduced a gang prevention bill and be open to working on broader youth violence prevention legislation. Another Representative may have an expertise on Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and want to work on economic security issues for survivors of violence.

Voice What's Working and Not Working

Once you have identified a legislator to meet with, set up a meeting with that Member of Congress (**Sample Letter to Request a Meeting, Appendix H**) and ask to discuss VAWA reauthorization. There are sample **Talking Points (Appendix I), Legislative Meeting Tips**

(Appendix J) and Thank You Email (Appendix K) for the meeting.

The best time to meet with your Member of Congress is during Congressional recesses, when Members return to their home states. Be ready with your top three points. Prepare for the meeting the same way you would for any important presentation or meeting. Bring the right partners and data. Remember, legislators respond well to stories about your personal experience with the issue you are addressing.

To learn when your Senators and Representatives will be in the state/district, consult the Congressional calendars.

Click here for the [Senate](#) and [House of Representatives](#) calendars.

Build Relationships

Building a relationship with policymakers and their staff is an integral part of raising awareness not only about VAWA, but also the valuable services offered by state and local programs for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Exposing violence and abuse and educating the policymaker can only bolster their support for this issue. After your meeting, follow up with easy reminders and fact sheets¹ on how they can support VAWA reauthorization.

If you meet with Congressional staff, be respectful and do not be discouraged. Members depend on their staff to help them keep track of the numerous issues that are important to their constituents. Staff are often the most knowledgeable on your issues, and they have substantial influence over the Member. Regardless of their

title or age, they are responsible for helping the Member make policy decisions and can be very important allies. If you don't know an answer to a question, please do not feel pressure to "make it up." Be honest and commit to sending the information as soon as possible.

REACHING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY

Overview

Why Organize?

As advocates, we often find ourselves overwhelmed and underfunded. Advocacy, particularly organizing and mobilization, often feels like something we know we should do but have no time for. When we do it, it is often crisis-driven: a budget dramatically slashed, a particularly horrific case of a domestic violence-related murder, a ballot initiative or lawsuit by an opponent. We jump into action because we have to, but often find ourselves limited in our effectiveness because we do not have the community connections and influence we need. Then, what we build is often lost shortly after the crisis subsides.

Community organizing is essential. It is the way that we improve our effectiveness while saving costs, and it is the only way to maintain social change across time.

Good organizing means groups can:

- Work together to strengthen their voice with the public and policymakers;
- Save money by not requiring each organization to do the same work and develop the same capacity;
- Allow organizations or institutions to do what they do best. If one group has great expertise in utilizing social media to get people to events and another has great connections to members of Congress and another has a trained "speakers bureau" of survivors who want to share their stories, each can bring to the table what they already have and do well.
- Provide opportunities for allies who are not necessarily full-time advocates to engage on the issue and help. For instance, businesses or law firms may have expertise and resources and committed leadership or staff. Include them in your coalition or collective effort even if they don't do this work every day or have the same level of issue expertise; and
- Provide a way to recruit more people and resources to the cause and amplify 'the noise' about the issue in the media, in the community, and to policymakers.

Organizing is really the nuts and bolts of identifying what your organization and your community can bring to the effort and how those contributions can best be

coordinated. It involves strategically identifying barriers as well as opportunities, and building and maintaining relationships across time. It can involve events, meetings and press conferences, but fundamentally it is about making and maintaining relationships and pooling together the collective voice of our movement to speak loudly and forcefully about the need to end domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

How to Successfully Engage the Community

While the specific community organizing activities are unique to a local community, the process of organizing community members effectively can be broken down and applied across communities and issues.² **A Sample Action Plan is attached as Appendix M.**

Begin the Process Early to Increase Your Odds of Success

- Come together
- Define your goal
- Determine how you'll work together

Have a plan, a goal and an expected decision. Invest the time in defining the goal and the process for working together at the outset and then you will be able to move ahead swiftly and with far less confusion or conflict.

Gather Accurate Information and Data about Your Community, Specific Needs and Definition of Success

Know what you're asking for and why you're asking. Policymakers and the media will be much more likely to trust you and fight for you if they are confident that you know what the need is and how what you're asking for will address it. Accurate data is key, and incorrect or outdated data can actually do more harm than good.

Put Together a Plan that Includes Input from Stakeholders

Having a plan seems basic, but given the crisis of time and staff resources that many organizations face, it is often the step that is left out. The process for developing the plan also matters. Individuals and organizations that have been part of developing the plan are far more likely to follow it. By dividing the workload, you also increase the likelihood of individual pieces actually getting done.

Following is a sample template to help you put together your own action plan. It was selected for its brevity and clarity.

² We would like to thank the Sheila Wellstone Institute/Wellstone Action and the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence for contributing templates and sample materials. For more information and additional tools, go to: www.wellstoneaction.org or www.kcasdv.org.

Do the Work

The plan is important, but in the end, what matters is getting the work done. Having a coordinator for the effort and then a designated contact at each organization is a good strategy, particularly if the contact is a senior level person. Senior-level accountability is important to move the process quickly and smoothly. Groups may want to pool resources to hire a coordinator, which also relieves potential tensions if the coordinator exists at one organization. The previous sections on policy and media lay out suggested events, activities and sample materials to help you think through the most effective activities for your particular campaign.

Demonstrate and Celebrate Your Success!

The importance of evaluation cannot be overstated. Funders, the media and our partners want us to demonstrate whether what we did worked and to document how it was done, so it can be scaled up and replicated. At the most basic level, this means keeping track of materials, documenting actions and decisions, and tracking media coverage or specific actions taken as a direct result of the activities.

Finally, don't be afraid to celebrate success. It matters. Take the time, even if it is simply a nice breakfast or an afternoon out of the office doing something fun together, to recognize the hard work that was put in and strengthen (or possibly repair) relationships that were developed over the course of a specific campaign or advocacy effort. That trust — and those relationships — will remain critical to success in the future.

USING THE MEDIA TO EDUCATE AND INFORM LEGISLATORS

Using Stories to Engage Communities

Domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking are covered in the news in some way every day, but unfortunately, they are typically covered in a sensational, unrealistic or even harmful way. To combat this problem, we encourage local programs across the country to gather stories, the good and the bad, as a way to get people talking about these issues. Using stories about violence in the community is one of the most effective ways of spreading messages of hope, help and healing. It's also one of the best ways to engage communities, local officials and lawmakers in understanding the need for services and the need for funding. It also helps communities understand that changing the conditions that allow sexual and domestic violence to exist is one of the best ways to prevent it from happening in the first place.

We also encourage you to engage your fellow community members around different media issues. Media issues that show domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking in a positive way are especially important. For example, for every “bad” or “horrible” story we see in the news, that advocates are asked to speak to, we encourage you to create a positive spin. Or if all your community sees in the news are stories about the devastation of sexual and domestic violence, why not use that as a perfect way to invite the media to do stories that highlight survivor successes as a result of receiving services from your agency or program. This allows you an opportunity to create the stories you want to see and the community should see.

Partners for Change

Publicly supporting those members of your community, especially lawmakers, is another way of engaging the community in a dialogue about sexual or domestic violence. Finding the right “voice” for the cause at the local, tribal, state, and national levels is a way of ensuring that they will champion policy changes that garner support for services to victims. Having strong support from policy and lawmakers will also help ensure that the stigma of sexual and domestic violence no longer keeps people silent.

- Determine your goal and plan of action for approaching lawmakers.
- Target specific lawmakers who can influence the change needed.
- Determine legislative priorities to help garner support for certain bills.
- Place op-ed pieces in the districts of the key legislators that you’ve identified.

Innovative Ways to Collect Stories

Tracking media coverage of domestic and sexual violence is very important, even when the quality of coverage is not ideal. You can sign up for domestic violence alerts from the following sites: Google, Associated Press, Reuters. Your local police department can also be a resource. Many police departments have domestic violence response teams in place, which can provide valuable information on how the police rely on VAWA funding to help reduce domestic violence incidence, as well as protect police themselves through domestic violence training. Many police departments also have the means to sign up for DV alerts and press releases.

Reaching Out To Media

Why Engage with the Media?

Effective mainstream and online media outreach is a powerful tool. Used strategically, it allows you to highlight your work in the field, shape news and online coverage, influence the stories developed by reporters and producers, and send powerful messages that educate the public, influence opinions and priorities, and affect the views of the public and policymakers. Domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking are prevalent and harmful in our

communities. Media engagement is an essential tool to inform the public and policymakers about violence-related issues and spread the word about the need to reauthorize and provide needed funding for VAWA and other federal domestic violence and sexual assault programs.

Generating local media coverage can be challenging. Smaller nonprofits and community-based organizations may feel like their messages are getting lost in the shuffle when competing with national news or larger organizations, but there are ways to make your voice heard. Community and neighborhood newspapers, radio, broadcast affiliates and online media are great options.

The media section of this toolkit is designed to help you identify media opportunities, work effectively with your community, and network through online media.

How to Successfully Engage the Media

Quick Ways to Get the Message Out

In just a few steps, you can help spread the word about the prevalence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in your community and the need for Congress to thoughtfully reauthorize VAWA. Begin by getting a few basics in place:

- Create or update a brochure or two-pager that describes your agency and the services it provides.
- Determine who your agency's spokesperson is and one alternate (this role is often filled by a program director or board chair). Think about previous clients who can share powerful personal stories about the way your agency helped them escape abuse. (Before proceeding, be sure that anyone who shares this kind of personal experience will not have their physical or emotional health imperiled by speaking out.)

Then, consider the kinds of social and mainstream media that will work best. Online media can be a quick and easy way to engage your audience and spread the word about a new program or event, especially for programs with limited resources. In minutes, you can let your audience know about an upcoming event or legislation that needs action.

Tools to help you communicate with the press or public include:

- Blog Posts, Facebook Posts, Twitter Posts, Instagram Stories
- Letters-to-the-Editor
- Holding an event
- Media Advisory

- News Release
- Pitching a columnist or show
- Commenting online about related stories in local media
- Radio

Blog Posts

Blogs are a great vehicle for communicating your message about the need to reauthorize VAWA. Blogs vary widely, so it is important to know which of your local blogs have influence and determine their focus and audience. **Samples of a Blog Post (Appendix N), Facebook Post (Appendix O) and Tweet (Appendix P) are attached to this tool kit.** Here are tips to get your message onto a blog:

- **Pitch the blogger with a personalized e-mail.** Before you ask a blogger to write about your issue, get to know her/his priorities and focus. (What does s/he blog about? Who is her/his audience?) Once you know how your issue relates to the blog, send a short (two paragraph) email to the blogger letting her/him know about the issue, why readers would be interested, and what their readers can do to support/take action.
- **Post comments on related blogs.** Another way to gain visibility on blogs is to post comments. Simply type a response into a comments box at the bottom of the blog. It's ok to leave a link to your website, but make sure your comments are relevant, timely, thoughtful, and contribute to the discussion on the blog.
- **Be a guest blogger.** Some blogs run posts written by authors not associated with the blog. The best way to approach these blogs is to email the person who runs the blog to say that you'd like to do a blog post on a particular topic, sketching out in one paragraph what you'd say. If they're interested, they'll ask you to write a post.
- **General tips.** Blog posts are somewhat less formal and often written in the first person (you can use "I" and "me"). Posts are usually no more than 500 words and they focus on making just one or two points. Make sure to include links to reports or websites with more information. Feel free to ask if they can include a relevant graphic or picture.
- **Facebook and Twitter.** Facebook and Twitter offer quick and easy ways to engage members of your community and share critical messages widely and quickly.
- **Keep it short.** Tweets can be no more than 280 characters and Facebook wall posts or status updates can be several sentences, so be concise. Think of a tweet or post like a headline. It should draw a reader's eye, but leave her/him wanting to know more.
- **Grab their attention.** Don't be afraid to use bold (but accurate) language to drive followers or friends to your desired location.
- **Become a self-promoter.** Post or tweet every news release, statement, policy alert or public action your organization takes and make sure to include a link to your organization's website. Let people know what's going on as often as you can.

- **Watch for opportunities to re-tweet** and/or to link to powerful news coverage about the issue.
- **Follow “high level” Twitter accounts and Facebook pages.** Look for other nonprofits, violence prevention advocates, agencies in your community or state, media and lawmakers. Follow, friend or like them and many organizations will follow, friend or like in return, or re-tweet or re-post your information.
- **Ask for ideas.** Facebook and Twitter are great ways to engage your audiences with a quick, simple ask. If you’re looking for ideas for a fundraiser, post a status update or tweet and follow the comments or replies.
- **Spread the word.** Ask your followers to re-post or re-tweet your messages, so that you can grow your list, and your messages can reach new networks.
- **Don’t forget the hashtag!** Use #vawa for messages that relate to the Violence Against Women Act and #VAWAReauth for messages specific to its reauthorization.

Letter-to-the-Editor/Op-Eds

Letters-to-the-editor (LTEs) come from newspaper readers and address issues of interest to the community. Send an LTE to your newspaper to respond to a story or article. An example would be to respond to a story about a local domestic violence homicide or about the impact of funding cuts on a local shelter. **A sample Letter to the Editor is attached as Appendix Q and a**

Sample Op-Ed is attached as Appendix R. Here are some other tips for a successful LTE or opinion pieces.

- **Make your case.** Always use your letter to advance your own messages, not simply to criticize somebody else for getting it wrong. Open your letter by mentioning that the article to which you are responding missed some important points – or got it just right – and then use your messages. Keep your letter focused on the issue, so it is not too self-serving for the organization. Your organization’s work should be mentioned but not be the focal point or your LTE will not be used.
- **Submit your letter.** Letters should be no more than three or four short paragraphs – usually 200 or so words. Make sure to sign your letter and provide a phone number, so the newspaper staff can follow up with you (they will not publish your phone number).

Media Advisory

Often referred to as media alerts or news advisories, media advisories are one-page announcements of upcoming events. An advisory is designed for journalists, not for the public. The purpose is to inform reporters of upcoming events, and convince them that these events are worthy of coverage. **A sample media advisory is**

attached as Appendix S. Send a media advisory to alert media to an upcoming event that you'd like them to cover – a news conference, an activity that the media might find interesting or an important speech.

- **What, When, Where, Who and Why.** An advisory should say when an event is, where it will be, what will be happening and who will be attending. Keep it short and sweet with a catchy headline; you can include more information in the press release along with boilerplates, etc.
- **What will the event look like/sound like?** It is a great idea to include visuals and other interesting details in the event description to draw a reporter's attention. This is particularly important for TV coverage but also for print photographers and radio reporters. Will there be a large crowd in similar T-shirts? A giant check or blown-up copy of a city proclamation? People handing out materials and asking questions?
- **Keep it clear.** At the top of your advisory, include the date that you are sending it, and the name, daytime phone number and email address of your contact person. Don't forget to follow up with the reporters by phone to invite them to the event.

News Release

News releases are one- to two-page reports of newsworthy events. Send a news release if you have something substantive to announce to reporters – a public event about domestic or dating violence, a new initiative that is launching, a new effort to engage teens in discussions about healthy relationships, etc. **A sample news release is annexed as Appendix T.**

- **Write in a reporter's voice.** A news release sounds like a news story written by a reporter and only states facts. Commentary in a news release is in quotes and attributed to your spokesperson.
- **Grab attention with a catchy headline.** News releases have a headline, and some may also have a "subhead," or a second headline. It also has a "lead paragraph" that clearly states the news and answers the Who, What, When, Where and Why questions.
- **Stick to a basic structure.** Many news releases are structured as follows:
 - Lead Paragraph: Catchy lead, then Who, What, When, Where, Why
 - 2nd Paragraph: Quote from organizational spokesperson (Powerful quotes that include relevant data, a news nugget, or a supportive fact not mentioned in the press release will entice the press to run the quote.)
 - Paragraph: More information about the announcement
 - Paragraph: More information and examples
 - Paragraph: Second quote from another organizational spokesperson
 - Paragraph: Background information on the issue or your community (this can be moved up to come earlier in the release)
- **Include your friends.** Be sure to mention any participation of partner organizations or event cosponsors.

- **Keep it clear.** At the top of your advisory, include the date that you are sending it, and the name, daytime phone number and email address of someone the media can contact to follow up. Make sure to follow up by phone to encourage reporters to come!

Pitch a Feature Story, Column or Show

Once you have decided that a local columnist or radio/TV program host is sympathetic to the issues, send her/him a “pitch” letter or email suggesting a column or show on violence prevention. Give them a reason to prioritize coverage now (spokesperson, compelling story, and pegging it to a news hook).

- **Know the column/program before you pitch.** Read a few columns or listen to the program a few times before pitching it. If you’re interested in getting a local radio or television talk show to focus on domestic or sexual violence, call the station and ask who the producer is. Then, email her/him with a “pitch” about why a show dedicated to ending domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking is right for their audience. Specify guests you could engage (including yourself, if appropriate) and stress that you would help build an audience by encouraging community members to listen to the program. If you appear on a call-in show, encourage friends and colleagues to call with questions. Take the same steps when reaching out to a columnist.
- **For radio, use outlines and cues to guide your audience.** Speak in outlines when possible. (“I’d make three points about why the Violence Against Women Act is so important to our community. First... Second... Third...”). Also use cues to alert the listener that something important is about to be said such as, “The important thing here is,” or “Look, here’s the point...”
- **Don’t speak in jargon, acronyms or abbreviations for policies or institutions.**
- **Whenever possible, use anecdotes or personal stories to illustrate your points.**

Hold an Event

Events that are media worthy are a great way to generate media attention about an issue like domestic or sexual violence. Be creative! A wide range of events may be interesting to a sympathetic reporter.

- **Stage the event to respond to a local or national news story.** If there is something in the news to “piggyback” on, such as a state or city considering legislation to fund or cut domestic violence programs, or an insensitive remark by a public official, plan an event that builds off that. Include a relevant call to action, such as demanding funding for additional services or VAWA’s reauthorization. Invite local reporters or bloggers to the event and offer interviews to reporters afterward.
- **Take advantage of national awareness months – Stalking Awareness Month in January; Teen Dating Violence in February; Sexual Assault Awareness**

Month in April; or Domestic Violence in October. For example, push local officials to make proclamations in your community that mirror national awareness months. Think “[Your Town] Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Week/Day.” By including local officials, you not only get their further investment and support, but you have a better chance of getting media attention at an announcement event. Include young people who can speak at your event about the importance of preventing dating violence

- **Think about having a prominent and supportive local lawmaker, newscaster, sports figure or other luminary speak, to help draw media to the event.** If you are working with a survivor who is willing and able to share a personal story, create a role for them.
- **Use a supply drive to generate a story on the need for services in your area.** Organize a supply drive (shoes, toys for children in shelter around the holidays, linens to help survivors get back on their feet) and invite the media to an event celebrating the end of the drive. Tally the numbers of supplies you’ve received and have a survivor talk about how helpful and useful the supplies are to victims of domestic violence. A director of a local organization could also speak about the need for more resources and for violence prevention programs, like those that are funded by VAWA.
- **Table at local community street festivals and farmers’ markets or participate in parades.**

CONCLUSION

We hope that you find the information, ideas and sample materials contained in this toolkit helpful to your efforts to change social norms, so violence and abuse in any form is no longer tolerated. By working in concert with your coalition partners, clearly identifying and building the case for your policy change and raising awareness through the media, public policies will change and better support efforts to end violence and abuse. Again, Congress is scheduled to consider VAWA soon. Continue to make the case to improve federal policy, and we will see a greater investment in building safe, healthy families.

APPENDIX A-D: FACT SHEETS

Fact Sheet	Purpose	Appendix	Download Link
The Critical Role of VAWA: Services to Victims and their Families	Provides information on how VAWA aids victims and families	A	Click Here
The Critical Role of VAWA: Strengthening the Legal System's Response	Highlights the ways VAWA improves system responses	B	Click Here
Dating Violence Overview	Overview of dating violence statistics	C	Click Here
Rape Prevention & Education Program	Provides details on successes and specific ask for increase	D	Click Here

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE ENGAGING POLICYMAKERS MATERIALS

LETTER TO REQUEST A MEETING IN LOCAL OFFICE

[Organization's (or your) Letterhead] Date

ATN: Scheduler Member's Name
United States House of
Representatives Street
Address with Suite or Floor
Number City, State Zip

Dear (Name of Scheduler):

We are requesting a meeting with Congressperson _____ on
__ to discuss the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).
We would like to discuss how domestic violence and sexual assault programs
have saved lives and families in
[your state]. We would like to share information about victims
of domestic and sexual violence in our community and the progress that has been
made with the support of federal programs.

[Identify who will be coming from your office and how many people will be in
attendance]. We are available for the entire afternoon and would need only about
15-20 minutes of the Congressperson's time. Please let me know if the
Congressperson is available to meet at
_____. If you need any additional information, please contact me at
__.

We would greatly appreciate the chance to meet with [him/her]. Thank you for your
assistance. Sincerely,

(Your Name)
(Your title if relevant)

APPDENIX F: SAMPLE ENGAGING POLICYMAKERS MATERIAL

TALKING POINTS FOR MEETING WITH POLICYMAKERS OR PRESS

Below are some basic talking points and facts to review before talking about the issue. Practice using these sample messages so they come naturally in conversation, and make sure to adapt them to reflect your unique voice, experience and views.

Talking Points

- Domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking are pervasive problems in our community, and every community. Too many people, young and old, live every day in fear of rape, domestic abuse and other forms of violence. [Insert local statistic]
- We must do much more to stop this violence and to teach the next generation that violence is always wrong.
- Here in _____ [Your City], we are lucky to have programs like [local programs – list all that you know about. You can often find a list of local programs on the state domestic violence and sexual assault coalition websites.] that protect survivors of violence.
- In _____ [Your State] VAWA has helped us provide [detail services, support, prevention work] to X number of people (if you know and/or has increased shelter beds/legal services/work with the District Attorneys Office/Law Enforcement]
- The Violence Against Women Act can help. Since it was enacted in 1994, it has provided life-saving assistance to women, men and children across the country.
- We need Congress to reauthorize this legislation this year to ensure a continued and strengthened response to these devastating crimes.
- There are solutions to the violence that pervades our society. There is real hope that we can stop domestic and sexual violence. VAWA is and remains the largest and best-known law addressing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Congress must reauthorize VAWA to support programs that protect families and hold criminals accountable.

If you run and/or work at a local program:

- As a private non-profit VAWA is so critical for us because [be specific about why VAWA matters, what it allows you to do, how many survivors lives you've changed and how]
- The proof is in the results. Our organization has been able to create model, innovative programs that are successful. [Explain results with statistics, explain that you are talking about UNDUPLICATED services and talk about

the evaluation and other assessment you do to assure your programs are effective and needed.]

APPENDIX G: SAMPLE ENGAGING POLICYMAKERS MATERIALS

MEETING TIPS

Beyond sending letters and making phone calls, meeting with your Senators or Representatives in person is one of the most effective ways to influence your elected officials. Members of Congress take their constituents' opinions seriously, especially when constituents take the time to go to a Member's office.

Meet during Congressional recess. Identify a time when your Member is on recess and will be in your state for an in-person meeting. Members are usually home during major holidays. You can find the Congressional calendars at www.house.gov and www.senate.gov.

Engage staff. Don't worry if you end up meeting with a staff person. Speaking with a Legislative Assistant in DC or a District Director in your state is often as important as speaking with the Member.

Know your legislator's views. Know your legislator's views before you meet, if possible. If he or she is already a cosponsor of VAWA, thank them for their support. If not, ask them to become a cosponsor. You can check to see if your Member is a cosponsor by visiting <http://congress.gov>.

Be on time. Be sure to arrive on time but be prepared to wait. Members often have multiple meetings and hearings scheduled on a single day and may be running late.

Make an introduction. Introduce yourself and your organization to the Member or staff. Be sure to mention how many clients/colleagues/members you or your organization has in their district or the state.

State the purpose of your meeting. Know what you want to talk about when you walk in the door. Keep your request short and state specifically what you want the member to do.

Focus on local issues. Personalize and localize your request as much as possible. You do not need to be an expert on the legislation, but it is very helpful if you can describe its impact on you, your organization and/or the people you serve. Know why you want this legislation to pass.

State your position. Make a specific ask. Tell the Member that you want, why you want it and ask him/her the position s/he intends to take on the issue.

You don't have to be an expert. Do not be afraid to say that you don't know something. If someone asks you a question that you do not know the answer to, tell them you will find out the answer and get back to them with the information.

Bring collateral material. Feel free to bring a one-page fact sheet/summary of the issue, a one-pager on your organization with your contact information and any group material (letter supporting VAWA signed by a local coalition) or public material (letter to the editor that was published).

Always follow up. Thank the Member and staff for the meeting, get the staffer's business card and follow up with a thank you email. Be sure to use the note to remind the Member of the issue and the commitment he/she made to your cause. You may include collateral material.

APPENDIX H: SAMPLE ENGAGING POLICYMAKERS MATERIAL

SAMPLE THANK YOU EMAIL³

Dear (Name of Member of Congress):

Thank you for your longtime support of issues important to women. As a [member of your state or district], and as my representative, you have stood for issues that are important to me and others, not only in our state, but around the country. Thank you so much for meeting with me and my colleagues on [date] to discuss the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

As you know, VAWA is at the core of our nation's response to the pervasive and insidious crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. VAWA must be swiftly reauthorized to continue and strengthen our work to protect victims and their families while holding perpetrators accountable for their actions.

[Tailor to address any questions raised in the meeting or specific topics discussed. Take the opportunity to follow up with materials to address concerns or questions raised in the meeting.]

We ask for your continued support on these issues, and thank you on behalf of the thousands of people affected by domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in our community.

Sincerely, (Your Name)

³Adapt as appropriate if you meet with a staff member instead of your Representative.

APPENDIX I: ACTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

Your organization or action team can complete this template as you plan your organizing campaigns in the future. You may want to keep this one blank, so you can make further copies. For more detailed guidance and materials to help you at each phase of the process, we recommend the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence's community organizing toolkit.

www.kcsdv.org/toolkit/commorgtoolkit.html.

Issues or Problem to be Solved

What is the issue or problem to be solved?

Be concrete and specific in naming the problem in order to target a solution.

Goals

Name 1-4 clear goals for the campaign. These will be your yardstick for determining success.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Targets

Who makes decisions about this issue? What influences or changes their decisions?

Core Constituencies

What people/groups are most affected by this issue? Who among them will be willing to participate in finding a solution?

Allies

In addition to the core constituents, who will be supportive and helpful in organizing efforts? How will you get their support?

Opposition

Who stands on the other side of this issue and will attempt to block/thwart or work against you? How do you deal with them?

Key Messages

Identify 2 –5 key messages for your campaign. Articulate them clearly and in plain language.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Tactics

What tactics will you use to accomplish your goals? (Much of this will be driven by power relations, community perceptions and strength of the organized base.)

Activities

Design activities to accomplish several things, such as increasing involvement of your base, impacting the media, and showing strength to decision-makers.

Organizational Structure

How will you be organized to accomplish your goal? Who makes what level of decision? How can you communicate efficiently?

Budget

Determine the minimum amount of money you need to conduct a campaign and how you might secure that. Build budgets with varying levels of resources. (Consider personnel, office supplies, materials, etc.)

Staff

Will this campaign require paid staff? If so, how many and what will they do?

Volunteers

How many volunteers need to be mobilized and what will you ask them to do?

Timeline

Sketch out a timeline for the organizing project. How many months overall will be needed? What will be accomplished in each shorter segment?

Community Building Activities

Design a few activities to build community and familiarity among the organizers.

Evaluation

How will you evaluate your campaign? How will you know if you were successful? Besides reaching major goals, what other outcomes are desirable?

APPENDIX J: FILL-IN-THE-BLANKS BLOG POST

No More

Here at [name of your agency], we were saddened but not surprised to hear about [provide an example of a local violent incident or another high-profile incident of domestic violence].

While we don't know the details in that case, we do know that domestic violence is a serious problem that in some way affects every community in Los Angeles and throughout the country. Every day in the U.S., three women are murdered by a current or former intimate partner. [Provide data about domestic violence in your state.]

The good news is that domestic violence is a problem we can help solve. Solutions lie in helping to teach the next generation that violence is NEVER the answer, talking to teens about the importance of building healthy relationships and supporting programs that help victims.

Everyone can urge Congress to do more to stop this violence and keep women and children safe. First, we need them to reauthorize and fully fund the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Take a moment to reach out to your Member of Congress [give specific Representative or Senators' names if the blog audience is from one district] and asking [him/her] to support VAWA reauthorization.

It's time we took a stand so that nobody else has to suffer the way [] reportedly did.

APPENDIX K: FILL-IN-THE-BLANKS FACEBOOK POST

- Have you seen this? [Link to a local news story.] I can't believe another assault/homicide happened in [community/neighborhood name]. Fed up, want to do something to help? Remind Representative [name] how critical VAWA is. [Put in phone number or email address that the readers should contact]
- Don't forget about our Domestic Violence Awareness Month vigil on [day of week]. Head down to [location] at [time]. We'll see you there!
- Looking for a venue for our next teen council meeting. Any ideas?

APPENDIX L: SAMPLE TWEETS

- Tune into @kabc, Fri10/29 at 7 am to see how Martha got back on her feet after leaving a violent relationship #domestic, #violence
- Just posted new action alert! Email Rep. [name] to support #vawa.
- Join us for a march to end violence against women Fri at 7:30pm. Volunteers needed! #domestic #violence

APPENDIX M: SHAREABLE SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGES

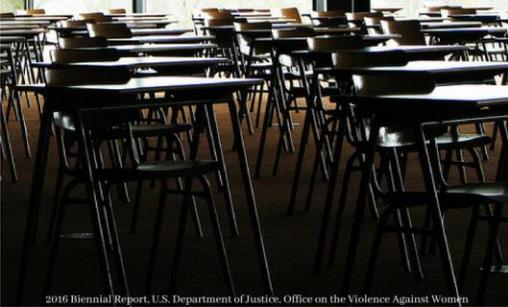
These images contain relevant information about the successes of VAWA. Download and use them in conjunction with your VAWA-related social media posts.



National Task Force to End Sexual & Domestic Violence

In a 2 year period, more than 1.5 million individuals participated in VAWA-funded education, awareness, or prevention activities related to sexual assault, domestic or dating violence, stalking, or child or elder abuse.

- 256,189 were elementary, middle or high school students
- 525,715 were college students
- 603,241 were other youth, professionals, and community members



2016 Biennial Report, U.S. Department of Justice, Office on the Violence Against Women

[Click Here to Download This Image](#)

National Task Force to End Sexual & Domestic Violence

VAWA
helped fund
288,858
victim advocates to



provide resources, information, and support
to survivors
from July 2013 to June 2015.

2016 Biennial Report, U.S. Department of Justice, Office on the Violence Against Women

[Click Here to Download This Image](#)

National Task Force to End Sexual & Domestic Violence

VAWA
funded
591,788
hotline calls
from July 1, 2013 to July 30, 2015



2016 Biennial Report, U.S. Department of Justice, Office on the Violence Against Women

[Click Here to Download This Image](#)

The Violence Against Women Act

funds over 3,000 full time staff

including

attorneys for victims, victim advocates, law enforcement
officers, sexual assault nurse examiners,
program coordinators, and administrative staff.



2016 Biennial Report, U.S. Department of Justice, Office on the Violence Against Women

[Click Here to Download This Image](#)

VAWA
funded

1,926,892

nights of housing
for survivors of violence

from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2015

2016 Biennial Report, U.S. Department of Justice, Office on the Violence Against Women

[Click Here to Download This Image](#)

In only 2 years,
through the VAWA funded Arrest Program



- Law enforcement made 66,095 arrests
(including 7,367 for protection order violations)
- Prosecutors disposed of 125,812 cases
(55% conviction rate)
- Courts disposed of 6,424 criminal cases
(66% conviction rate)

2016 Biennial Report, U.S. Department of Justice, Office on the Violence Against Women

[Click Here to Download This Image](#)

APPENDIX N: FILL-IN-THE-BLANKS LETTER-TO-THE-EDITOR

To The Editor:

Your recent story [insert headline and date] did a wonderful job of underscoring how pervasive domestic violence is. In fact, violence against women and children affects everyone in [name of local community] in some way. In 1994, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was a giant step forward for our nation. Its passage meant that our federal government finally acknowledged that domestic and sexual violence cause tremendous harm, and put resources into helping victims. Millions of families are better off as a result.

The time has come to again reauthorize this critical legislation. Evidence shows that VAWA is working. Over the last 20 years, domestic and sexual violence have declined. But there is more work to do. On average, each day current and former boyfriends and husbands murder three women in America and several hundred people are raped or sexually assaulted. Countless children witness this violence. The Violence Against Women Act of 2018 will build on efforts to prevent violence before it begins and teach the next generation that violence is always wrong.

We need more resources for children and youth who have been exposed to violence, and to engage men as allies in this work. Congress must reauthorize this legislation and invest more in building healthy communities.

Sincerely,

[Name, Title, Organization, Contact Info]

APPENDIX O: FILL-IN-THE-BLANKS OP-ED

Time to Move Beyond Statistics - [Your name]

The statistics are staggering. On average, three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends each day in this country. Every year in [local area], [insert local statistic on the number of domestic violence calls to hotlines, victims seeking shelter or other services, domestic homicides, etc]. Several hundred people are raped or sexually assaulted each day in the United States. Locally, it is [insert statistic].

But violence is more than statistics. Domestic violence touches every one of us. It fills emergency rooms and morgues, keeps employees from being able to work, terrorizes children and interferes with their ability to learn. It drives up health care costs, contributes to crime on our streets and causes lasting harm to families and communities.

Domestic violence affects all of us, so it is everybody's business. Domestic and dating violence, rape and sexual assault, and stalking are pervasive problems in our society. No community is unaffected.

It's time – way past time – to do much more to stop this violence, and to protect the teens and young women who suffer the highest rates of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. That means putting more resources into prevention and helping victims and survivors.

That starts with using what we know. We know how to create violence prevention programs that work, and we know how to develop services that are effective in protecting victims. There are examples right here in [your town]. For instance, programs like [give the name of a local program that works with young people or victims in your area and describe the services and programs it provides].

But we aren't taking those programs to scale and implementing them as widely as we should. In fact, just about every program I know has cut back on services or is in danger of doing so because of serious budget shortfalls.

Here at [your agency], [give an example with details about how cuts are making it harder or impossible for your program to meet victims' and survivors' needs. If possible, give an example of a victim who needed a certain service you can no longer provide, using only a first name to identify them.]

It's time to reverse that trend. Now more than ever, we need Congress to make it a priority to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) – essential legislation that funds victim services, prevention programs and other critically

needed community services. Stopping domestic and sexual violence and protecting victims must be a priority in our city, our state and our country. There's no time to waste. Congress should reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act and provide appropriate funding for the programs it supports.

APPENDIX P: SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

October 25, 2011

Media contacts: Roberta Sklar | rsklar@avp.org |
917.704.6358 Sue Yacka | syacka@avp.org |
646.484.9621

2010 Report on Intimate Partner Violence in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV- Affected Communities in the U.S.

To be released on October 27, 2011

WHAT: The release of *Intimate Partner Violence within Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Communities in the U.S. in 2010: a Report from the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs.*

WHO: The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs ([NCAVP](#)) works to prevent, respond to, and end all forms of violence against and within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and HIV-affected (LGBTQH) communities. NCAVP is a national coalition of local member programs, affiliate organizations and individuals who create systemic and social change. We strive to increase power, safety and resources through data analysis, policy advocacy, education and technical assistance. NCAVP is coordinated by the [New York City Anti-Violence Project](#).

WHEN: Report embargoed until Thursday, October 27, 12 PM EDT/9 AM PDT

WHERE: National

WHY: The need for LGBTQH anti-violence programs (AVPs) that address the needs of QH survivors of intimate partner violence has never been greater. In 2010, NCAVP programs received 5,052 reports of intimate partner violence, an increase of 38.1% from the 3,658 reports in 2009. This year's report shows an increase in the severity of violence experienced by LGBTQ and HIV-affected survivors of intimate partner

violence. NCAVP calls for local, state and federal governments and corporations and private foundations to support all survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence.

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APPENDIX Q: SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Camille Hayes, Public Affairs Specialist,
Camille@cpedv.org California Partnership to End
Domestic Violence
Phone: 916-444-7163
Fax: 916-444-7165
Web site: www.cpedv.org

Lawmakers Trivialize Risk to Domestic Violence Victims Blocking Urgency Bill Puts Lives in Danger

Sacramento, September 15, 2009—California's domestic violence advocates expressed shock at the attitude displayed by the Senate GOP leaders responsible for blocking SBX3 13, an urgency bill that would have reinstated funding to domestic violence shelters devastated by the Governor's elimination of State funds in July. The bill failed in the Senate on the last day of the session, amid political maneuverings in which Republican Senators abstained from voting on all bills requiring a two-thirds majority to pass.

Commenting to the Los Angeles Times, Senate GOP leader Dennis Hollingsworth said that there was "nothing to be alarmed about" in delaying passage of the bills. Niko Johnson, Executive Director of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition of Grass Valley, had to close her shelter August 5, one of six shelters that have closed since the funding cut.

She said Hollingsworth's comments show that he is unaware of the gravity of the situations many domestic violence victims face. Since closing her shelter, Johnson said her staff has had to turn away 14 families, including at least eight children. "We are the only shelter in Western Nevada County," she said. "We are seeing people choose to stay in abusive relationships because there are no longer services in our area. When they're forced to stay victims' lives are endangered, and so are those of their children."

Tara Shabazz, Executive Director of the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (CPEDV), said it's discouraging that such an urgent matter was not given priority. "For the communities whose shelters have closed this is a life-or-death crisis," she said. "We're angry not only that this bill was victim to political gamesmanship, but also that the lawmakers who blocked it are now trivializing the risk to domestic violence victims. It is irresponsible. People's lives are at stake."

Sen. Leland Yee, the bill's original author, has promised to keep working to reinstate shelter funding as quickly as possible. "I am deeply disappointed that petty Sacramento politics and end-of-session drills were put before the lives of victims," he said.

CPEDV urges the Governor and Legislature to right this wrong and re-fund our state's shelters immediately.

About CPEDV

The California Partnership to End Domestic Violence is California's statewide domestic violence coalition, with over 200 member organizations and individuals. Working at the local, state and national levels for more than 25 years, the California Partnership has a long track record of successfully passing over 100 pieces of legislation on behalf of battered women and their children. As the unified voice for California's domestic violence agencies, CPEDV provides statewide leadership on public policy issues, offers training and technical assistance to domestic violence service providers and promotes public awareness through community outreach efforts. With offices in Sacramento, CPEDV's member programs span the entire state.

Related Articles:

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-legis-feuds15-2009sep15,0,6612292.story>

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20090908/ap_on_re_us/us_california_budget_domestic_violence

APPENDIX R - FEDERAL AND STATE RESOURCES

For grant information related to the Violence Against Women Act and Related Programs:

- U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office on Violence Against Women receives the bulk of VAWA funding; the office administers nearly \$420 million in annual grant allocations. <http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov>
- DOJ's Office for Victims of Crime administers the Crime Victims Fund. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/grants/index.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funds domestic and sexual violence prevention programs. <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/index.html>
- The Office on Women's Health administers several VAWA programs. www.womenshealth.gov/owh/

To track the status of federal bills or contact Members of Congress, go to <http://thomas.loc.gov/>.

To receive updates on the Administration's actions to address violence against women, go to: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/cwg>.

Organizations that have policy expertise can help you tailor your issues to policy opportunities. Here are samples of some national, state, and local organizations that distribute information on violence against women policy opportunities:

Break the Cycle:

www.breakthecycle.org Futures

Without Violence:

www.endabuse.org Jewish

Women International: www.jwi.org

Legal Momentum:

www.legalmomentum.org

National Alliance to End Sexual Violence:

www.naesv.org National Center for Victims of Crime: www.ncvc.org

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence:

www.ncadv.org National Coalition of Anti-Violence

Programs: www.avp.org National Domestic

Violence Hotline: www.thehotline.org National

Network to End Domestic Violence:

www.nnedv.org YWCA: www.ywca.org

APPENDIX S: Advocacy Opportunities During the Federal Legislative Process for VAWA Reauthorization*

The process below can be used for any national bill. In recognition that VAWA would expire in 2011, more than 20 different working groups led by advocates committed to ending violence against women met during the spring and summer of 2009 to analyze how the Violence Against Women Act is working in communities. The working groups also prepared recommendations in preparation for the 2011 reauthorization. The working groups addressed the existing titles of the legislation, such as sexual assault services or children/youth, as well as emerging areas needing response, such as victims in same sex relationships. In general, most felt VAWA was doing a good job, and the most significant critiques were simply the need for more funding and the expansion of VAWA programs to help more diverse communities. Advocates drafting language combining the various recommendations and submitted this information to the House and Senate Judiciary Committee offices.

Opportunities for Action⁴

- Bill is introduced
 - Ask your representative to become a co-sponsor.
 - You can check to see if they are already a cosponsor at congress.gov.
- Judiciary Subcommittee consideration
 - If your legislator is a subcommittee member, ask him/her to contact subcommittee members to express support/opposition.
- Full Judiciary Committee Consideration
 - Same contacts as the subcommittee process. If other subject matters are contained in the bill, other committees may need to waive jurisdiction or may also have hearings.
- Full House/Senate Floor Votes
 - Ask your legislator to support/oppose when the bill comes to the floor.
- Conference Committee
 - Same contacts as the subcommittee process. In addition, support assistance for negotiations to assure best compromise by conference committee.
- Bill Before President
 - After a bill is passed, make your views known to the President. Urge that they sign the bill to make it a law.
- Administrative Advocacy
 - Once VAWA is reauthorized, follow and comment on proposed rules and notices related to the implementation of VAWA. The Federal Register

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>) is the official daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of Federal agencies and organizations.

⁴ Adapted from Jewish Women International's Guide to Advocacy & Action, 2008.

APPENDIX T: KEY CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES

Congressional Committees are a central part of the legislative process. Committees are the first stop, and often the last stop, for the thousands of bills that are introduced in Congress during each legislative session.

The Judiciary Committee is the key committee with jurisdiction over VAWA. If you are represented by any of the legislators who serve on the committee, it is critical that you reach out to them to support the reauthorization of VAWA. Members of Congress take their constituents' concerns very seriously. The full list of committee members can be found on the Judiciary Committee websites — www.judiciary.house.gov and www.judiciary.senate.gov. Updates on hearings and legislation will also be posted on these websites.

For further information contact:

National Task Force to End Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

ReauthorizeVAWA@gmail.com