DATE: November 18, 2019
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, NAACP Washington Bureau

**ACTION ALERT**

**THE ISSUE:**
On 4-4-19, the House passed, by a bipartisan margin of 263 yeas to 158 nays, H.R. 1585, a bill to reauthorize, or update, and strengthen the NAACP-supported and very successful Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). VAWA, was originally enacted in 1994 and has been reauthorized and strengthened by strong bipartisan majorities in 2000, 2005, and 2013. The law is seen today as one of the most effective pieces of legislation ever enacted to end domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. It has dramatically improved the law enforcement response to violence against women and has provided critical services necessary to support women in their struggle to overcome abusive situation. Sadly, the law expired on February 15, 2019.

Congresswoman Karen Bass (CA) and Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (PA) introduced H.R. 1585, the bipartisan Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019, and Senator Dianne Feinstein (CA) introduced the identical language in the Senate (S. 2843) on 11-13-19. This legislation not only reauthorizes necessary funding increases to VAWA programs, but it also makes modest yet vital enhancements to existing law, based on input from VAWA service providers as well as those who have benefitted from the program. Specifically, H.R. 1585 / S. 2843: invests in prevention; ends impunity for non-Native perpetrators of sexual assault, child abuse co-occurring with domestic violence, stalking, sex trafficking, and assaults on tribal law enforcement officers on tribal lands; improves enforcement of court orders that require adjudicated domestic abusers to relinquish their firearms; improves access to housing for victims and survivors; protects victims of dating violence from firearm homicide; helps survivors gain and maintain economic independence; updates the federal definition of domestic violence for the purposes of VAWA grants only to acknowledge the full range of abuse victims suffer (does not impact the criminal definition of domestic violence); maintains existing protections for all survivors; and improves the healthcare system’s response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.

We must now let the Senate know that a weaker reauthorization of VAWA are not acceptable, nor are rollbacks of existing protections for survivors. We are at a crucial moment in the movement to end domestic and sexual violence. Programs and protections created by VAWA increase access to safety and justice.

**CONTACT BOTH YOUR U.S. SENATORS AND URGE QUICK PASSAGE OF VAWA WITH NO WEAKENING AMENDMENTS**
THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:
Contact both your Senators and URGE THEM TO SUPPORT A COMPREHENSIVE, AGGRESSIVE REAUTHORIZATION WHICH BUILDS ON THE SUCCESSES OF VAWA. Urge them to co-sponsor and support S. 2843 To contact your Senators you may:

✓ Make a Phone Call:
   Call your Senators in Washington by dialing the Capitol Switchboard and asking to be transferred to their offices. The switchboard phone number is (202) 224-3121 (see message section, below).

✓ Write a Letter
   To write letters to your Senators, send them to:
   The Honorable (name of Senator)
   U.S. Senate
   Washington, D.C. 20510

Send a Fax
   If you would like to send a fax, call your Senators’ offices (through the Capitol switchboard) and ask for their fax numbers (you can use either the attached sample letter or the message box, below).

✓ Send an E-Mail
   To send an e-mail to your Senators, go to www.senate.gov and click on “Contact” under “Senators.” You can look up your Senators by name or state; go to their websites to send an e-mail.

REMEMBER TO CONTACT BOTH YOUR SENATORS!!!!!!

THE MESSAGE

• VAWA has proven itself to be one of the most effective pieces of legislation enacted to end domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. It has dramatically improved the law enforcement response to violence against women and has provided critical services necessary to support women in their struggle to overcome abuse and violence.

• The bipartisan reauthorization legislation currently supported by the NAACP makes vital enhancements to existing law, based on input from service providers as well as victims and survivors who have benefitted from VAWA.

• A weaker reauthorization of VAWA is not acceptable, nor are rollbacks of existing protections for survivors.

• We need to pass the VAWA reauthorization by the U.S. Senate as soon as possible.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS IMPORTANT MATTER!!!
If you have any questions, call Hilary Shelton at the Washington Bureau at (202) 463-2940.

MEMBERSHIP IS POWER! JOIN THE NAACP TODAY.
To become an NAACP member or to sign up for e-mail legislative and press updates, visit www.naacp.org
(date)

The Honorable ____________________________
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.  20510

RE: MY STRONG SUPPORT FOR A ROBUST, YET REASONABLE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA), S. 2843

Dear Senator ______________________________:

As your constituent, I strongly urge you to support S. 2843, which is a carefully crafted update and strengthening reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). We are at a crucial moment in the movement to end domestic and sexual violence. A weaker reauthorization of VAWA is not acceptable, nor are rollbacks of existing protections for survivors.

Today VAWA is seen as one of the most effective pieces of legislation enacted to end domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. It has dramatically improved the law enforcement response to violence against women and men and has provided critical services necessary to support individuals in their struggle to overcome abusive situation. High profile stories of abuse and assault are bringing these topics to dinner tables across the country and inspiring some survivors to come forward. Programs and protections created by VAWA increase their access to safety and justice. We have come too far in our struggle to allow ourselves to go backwards.

S. 2843 makes modest yet common-sense and vital enhancements to existing law, based on input from service providers as well as victims and survivors who have benefitted from VAWA. Identical legislation, H.R. 1585 passed the House of Representatives by a strong bipartisan margin in early April, 2019. The Senate must not allow this crucial reauthorization, and all of the vital programs it supports, to die! Please do what you can to see S. 2843 enacted sooner rather than later, and I hope you will contact me to let me know what I can do to help.

Sincerely,

(sign and print your name and remember to include your address)

Remember to contact your Representative and BOTH your Senators.