

**Kiersten Stewart, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, Futures Without Violence**

Good Morning. My name is Kiersten Stewart and I direct the Washington, D. C. office of Futures Without Violence, formerly the Family Violence Prevention Fund. We are a national non-profit organization dedicated to ending violence against women, children and families here in the U.S. and internationally. I am pleased to welcome you to this briefing on behalf of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women. The National Task Force is a large and diverse coalition of hundreds of national, tribal, state, territorial and local organizations that work collectively to prevent domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking, and represent thousands of programs and millions of victims of these four crimes throughout the United States and territories.

Today we are here to discuss one of our nation's most important tools in responding to violence against women: the Violence Against Women Act, or VAWA. VAWA is truly one of our nation's great policy successes. First passed in 1994, VAWA was most recently reauthorized 6 years ago, and signed into law by President George W Bush in January of 2006. In that time, VAWA has saved lives by improving the law enforcement response to these crimes, protecting victims more effectively, and breaking the often inter-generation cycle of physical and sexual violence. Over the years, VAWA has continued to improve, doing more to better address the needs of sexual assault victims and better serve victims from traditionally marginalized and under-served communities. VAWA programs now also address prevention and engage more stakeholders in the work to prevent and respond to violence and abuse such as health care providers and employers. You will hear more about these programs from our speakers.

Importantly, it has also been one of the great bi-partisan success stories, a trend we're glad has continued.

Senators Leahy and Crapo recently introduced their version of VAWA, S. 1925, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, and it is now scheduled to be marked-up on Thursday. We are also currently working with Judiciary Chairman Lamar Smith and Ranking Member John Conyers on the House's version of VAWA, which we hope to see introduced soon.

The reauthorization of VAWA could not come at a more critical time. According to the CDC's 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey- 1 in 4 women has been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner and nearly 1 in 5 women has been raped in her lifetime. Of men who reported being raped, close to 30 percent were raped before they were 11 years old.

Although VAWA has transformed our nation's response to violent crimes against women, increasing the reporting of domestic violence by as much as 51%<sup>1</sup> and reducing the number of women killed by an intimate partner, more must be done and can be done to combat this

epidemic. VAWA's successes must now reach all of our communities, and we need to reach younger men and women, who still experience this kind of violence and abuse at even higher rates than adults.

In today's briefing, you will hear from some of the leading national, state, and local experts about the positive impact of VAWA in their communities and the urgent need for reauthorization. In the interest of time, I will introduce all of the panelists now as well as my co-facilitator Monika Johnson Hostler, who will facilitate the question and answer session and close the briefing. We hope you leave today's briefing with a full understanding of the scope of VAWA programs and services but I know I speak for all the panelists when I say please consider us a resource, and if there is any question we can't answer we will happily get you to the right expert, many of whom are in the room today.

And now to our distinguished panelists:

Grace Huang is an attorney and a long-time advocate on behalf of victims of domestic and sexual violence. She currently serves as the Policy Director for the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence and is a Steering Committee Member of the Asian Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence. Grace has broad expertise and is known nationally for her work on ending violence against immigrant women and their families.

Judge Patricia Martin currently serves as the President of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. She is Presiding Judge of the Child Protection Division, Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois and has served on the bench since 1996. She is a member and past chair of the Supreme Court of Illinois Judicial Conference Study Committee on Juvenile Justice and a member of the Illinois Supreme Court Special Committee on Child Custody Issues. She received her education at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vt., and Northern Illinois University College of Law.

Debi Cain is the Executive Director of the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board and currently serves at the VAWA Stop Administrator for the state of Michigan. She spent the first 15 years of her career as the founding executive director of H.A.V.E.N., Oakland County, Michigan's sexual assault and domestic violence program. After leaving H.A.V.E.N., she served as the director of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She also has served as the director for the Violence Against Women Training Institute, under the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board and is a founding member of the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Rev. Dr. Anne Marie Hunter is the founder and director of Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence. As a survivor of domestic violence herself and former employee at a battered women's shelter, Anne Marie has been working for decades to end the cycle of violence and abuse, focusing specifically on mobilizing the faith community in this effort. In

1991, she founded Safe Havens, based in Boston, Massachusetts, to improve the faith community's response to families and young people experiencing abuse. By providing education, training, and resources to congregations and faith leaders in the Greater Boston area, Safe Havens encourages faith leaders to engage in prevention, earlier intervention, accountability, and social change.

Monika Johnson Hostler is the Executive Director of the NC Coalition Against Sexual Assault and has been working to end sexual and domestic violence for the past 15 years, both on the local and national level. Most recently Monika has presented and written on working with the media; Sexual Violence in the African American community; sexual violence in the military, and leadership development. Monika is the current board president of the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, advocating for federal policy and legislative change. She serves on various boards and committees including the NC Domestic Violence Commission and the NC Criminal Justice Partnership. Most recently Monika was appointed by US Attorney General Eric Holder to the National Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women.

<sup>1</sup> "Intimate Partner Violence in the U.S." U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Jan. 2008.; Cassandra Archer et al., Institute for Law and Justice, National Evaluation of the Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies Program 14 (Nov. 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Uniform Crime report (UCR) Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR), Federal Bureau of Investigation. (Decrease is based on date collected between 1993 and 2007.)

**Grace Huang, Policy Director, Washington Coalition Against Domestic Violence; and Steering Committee Member, Asian Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence**

Good morning, Thank you for the opportunity to talk about the Violence Against Women Act, and for the opportunity to share our support for this legislation from the other Washington.

First passed by Congress in 1994, the Violence Against Women Act has always been a bipartisan piece of legislation. VAWA was reauthorized in 2000 and the most recent reauthorization was signed into law in 2005 by President George W. Bush. Since its initial passage, VAWA has truly reflected the needs of victims. With each reauthorization Congress has listened to input from advocates about what is working well, and what areas of unmet need continue to need attention. This reauthorization process has been no different, and we appreciate Congress' continued efforts to seek input from victims and the programs that serve them.

Since 1994 we have clearly seen that VAWA is working. More victims feel safe coming forward to access services and report abuse to law enforcement. The number of individuals killed by an intimate partner has decreased by 34% for women and 57% for men, and the rate of non-fatal intimate partner violence against women has decreased by 53%. There are more

resources to address sexual assault, and health care providers and law enforcement have increased their ability to work together to hold perpetrators accountable.

Collaboration between victim service providers and law enforcement agencies have increased and improved as a direct result of VAWA. And yet, despite these successes, there is still much work to be done. On just one day in 2011, while over 67,000 victims and their children were served by domestic violence programs across the country, over 10,500 requests for services went unmet, largely because of lack of resources. As the law enforcement response to these pervasive and insidious crimes increases, victim service providers across the country have seen a corresponding increased demand for services.

The Violence Against Women Act is the federal government's comprehensive effort to support victims and hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes. VAWA recognizes the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to prevent and end domestic and sexual violence, and appropriately provides multiple programs and gateways to services to ensure the most effective response possible for all victims.

In Washington, VAWA has supported important, innovative programs that have increased the awareness of domestic and sexual violence and supported new collaborations across communities large and small. We've seen VAWA support the development of law enforcement agency policies on addressing domestic violence committed by police officers. VAWA has supported our Administrative Office of the courts in holding forums across the state, from Vancouver to Omak, to gather feedback from law enforcement officers, judges, victim advocates, prosecutors, and defense and family law attorneys on how to develop protocols in reconciling multiple, conflicting no-contact orders between the same parties. VAWA has supported our programs in rural eastern Washington, work with their local wineries and fruit packing sheds in providing support to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

The bipartisan Leahy/Crapo Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act has been introduced in the Senate and provides key improvements while strengthening the victim services that are at the foundation of our nation's response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. The bill also streamlines programs, enhances the efficient use of funds, consolidates 10 existing programs into 3, and reduces authorization levels by a total of \$166 million in annual authorization levels compared to the 2005 bill.

These include:

Title one focuses on the criminal justice response, which Judge Martin from the National Council of Juvenile Court Judges will talk about in greater detail. This iteration of VAWA ensures that all four crimes are adequately addressed. Included in this title and throughout the bill is an increased focus on services for victims of sexual assault, which continues to be underreported. The title ensures an effective law enforcement response to domestic violence,

dating violence, sexual assault and stalking, and improves coordination on the state and local level.

This title also includes provisions to strengthen collaboration between law enforcement and victim service providers and increases attention on effective interventions to reduce the number of domestic violence homicides. The Legal Assistance for Victims Program, which provides critically-needed legal services, includes strengthened training requirements to ensure that grantees have the needed expertise to address the complex legal needs of victims.

Title two includes the Sexual Assault Services Program and programs to address the specific needs of victims living in rural areas and training and services for victims with disabilities and victims later in life. These services are at the foundation of our nation's response to violence and improvements to them improve the entire systematic response to violence. Specifically, the title includes improvements to the administration of programs, enhances the funding formula for the Sexual Assault Services Program and adjusts the definition of a rural state to reflect updated population data from the 2010 census and ensure that our nation's rural states which often have far fewer resources and many more safety and service delivery barriers.

Titles three and four consolidate several programs to streamline services and allow many agencies to coordinate and address the needs of youth and college-aged victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. These titles also highlights prevention efforts and the needs of children who have been exposed to violence. Prevention programs are a crucial component of our nation's response to these crimes and work to break the intergenerational cycle of violence. In my state and many others our programs have been around long enough to see the children of former clients come to access services. We know we need to enhance our ability to reach young people as they are just learning how to be in relationships with one another, as well as support the resiliency of children who have been exposed to domestic and sexual violence, so we can all move toward healthier communities. We need to develop programming that will engage young people, utilizing the technology and communication methods they use, as well as develop age appropriate services.

Title five strengthens the healthcare system's response to these crimes. And we know that even if victims do not seek criminal justice system interventions, that healthcare providers can provide a crucial link to support.

Title six addresses the critical need for safe housing for victims by building upon the landmark housing protections included in VAWA 2005. This bill extends these protections to victims of sexual assault and extends the VAWA housing protections to nine federal housing programs that are not currently covered.

Title seven reauthorizes funding for the operation of the National Resource Center on Workplace Responses, which provides information and assistance to employers to develop

and implement responses to domestic and sexual violence. In these challenging economic times, we hope that the House will follow the leadership of Congresswoman Roybal Allard and Congressman Poe, who reintroduced the SAFE Act this year, which includes both National Workplace Resource Center and ensures the availability of unemployment insurance for victims.

Title eight provides essential protections for immigrant victims, including critical improvements to the U visa program. U visas are an important law enforcement tool, available to non-citizen victims who have been or are likely to be helpful to a criminal investigation or prosecution. In my state, which shares a border with Canada, and where we have a large number of high-tech workers with dependent spouses and children, we hear from victim advocates that victims are often fearful even to seek services, for fear of deportation, much less contacting law enforcement. The U visa encourages some of the most vulnerable and isolated victims to come forward and seek the assistance of the legal system to hold perpetrators accountable, as well as the support of victim advocates and other services.

Title nine addresses domestic and sexual violence among American Indian and Alaska Native Women, who are currently victimized at rates far higher than any other group of women in this country. This title provides for increased tribal jurisdiction to hold perpetrators accountable and strengthens efforts to meet these victims' needs. In my state there over 35 Indian tribes, including 29 that are currently federally recognized, and the provisions that clarify tribal jurisdiction over perpetrators are key provisions that will help many victims in Washington State and across the country.

And Finally, Title 10) Enhances the federal response to sexual assault by updating federal criminal law and addressing sexual abuse in custodial settings

As we move forward, we hope that the House will work to address areas of unmet need which continue to need attention. VAWA 2011 reinforces services, prevention efforts, and interventions for all groups of victims, be they elders, victims with disabilities, those who are Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender, immigrants, youth, Native women, in faith communities, in rural communities, etc. This is consistent with what we have learned about addressing violence in various communities through the passage of VAWA, which has historically addressed specific solutions to reflect the differentiated needs of victims.

In sum, we greatly appreciate the attention that the House Judiciary Committee's leadership has given to the reauthorization of VAWA, and we are encouraged by the focus and diligent work on both sides of the aisle to ensure that VAWA continues to meet the needs of victims. We thank Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Conyers for their commitment to this crucial, lifesaving legislation.

## **Judge Patricia M. Martin, President, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges**

Good morning, and thank you for attending this briefing on the successes of the Violence Against Women Act. My name is Patricia Martin. I am the Presiding Judge of the Child Protection Division, Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, and have served on the bench since 1996.

Currently, I am the President of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. The members of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) are comprised of more than 1,900 judges, referees, commissioners, masters and other juvenile and family law professionals who confront a variety of juvenile and family related issues, including family violence. The NCJFCJ provides cutting-edge judicial education, training, wide-ranging technical assistance, and research to an estimated 30,000 judges and related personnel in the nation's courts.

NCJFCJ is a firm supporter of S. 1925, the Leahy-Crapo Violence Against Women Act recently introduced in the Senate. Let me tell you how VAWA helps to enhance courts' effectiveness in family violence cases every day.

VAWA-funded training brings together judges, court personnel, attorneys, victim advocates, and child welfare personnel to learn best practices for handling the needs of families in domestic violence, family, criminal and juvenile courts.

We know that domestic violence touches many families in our courts—regardless of the case type. We also know from research that “child abuse and domestic violence frequently co-occur; studies estimate that in 30 to 60% of families experiencing one form of family violence, the other is present as well.”<sup>1</sup> Additionally, studies suggest that in “divorces marked by ongoing disputes over the custody and care of children, there is often a history of domestic violence in the family and a likelihood that the violence will continue after separation.”<sup>2</sup> Researchers also tell us that adolescents who have grown up in homes where domestic violence is present are more likely to “attempt suicide, abuse drugs and alcohol, run away from home or engage in other delinquent behavior, and commit sexual assault crimes.” A study conducted by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention found that “70%

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<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey L. Edleson, *The Overlap between Child Maltreatment and Woman Battering*, 5 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN 134-54 (1999) as cited in NCJFCJ, REASONABLE EFFORTS CHECKLIST FOR DEPENDENCY CASES INVOLVING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE at 9 (2008).

<sup>2</sup> Joan Meier, esq, George Washington University, RATE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN CONTESTED CUSTODY CASES (2005) available at <http://www.stopfamilyviolence.org/info/custody-abuse/statistics/rate-of-domestic-violence-in-contested-custody-cases>.

of adolescents who lived in families with domestic violence self-reported violent delinquency, compared to 49% of adolescents from households without this conflict.”<sup>3</sup>

One of our signature programs is the National Judicial Institute on Domestic Violence, which has been funded by VAWA for more than a decade. The National Judicial Institute judicial education programs help our judges use proven trauma-based responses that help the child in juvenile court who has witnessed domestic violence, while also helping the adult victim seeking a protection order in a specialized domestic violence court.

Judges play a critical role in the enforcement of protection orders. Judges estimate that without some types of compliance review, upwards of 75% of respondents will continue to abuse. When judges are trained in best practices around enforcing the orders they write, monitoring abusers’ behavior, and holding offenders accountable, the word gets out in the community and recidivism drops.<sup>4</sup>

Solid research tells us that these practices save communities money in the long run in domestic violence and stalking cases. A recent report by the National Institute of Justice summarized the impact of the work of courts in Kentucky. This study found that Kentucky’s courts, by issuing and monitoring protection orders in domestic violence and stalking cases, saved the state of Kentucky \$85 million in averted justice system and social system costs in just one year.

Evaluation demonstrates that the VAWA-funded National Judicial Institute developed and administered by NCJFCJ in partnership with Futures Without Violence and the Office on Violence Against Women improves judicial responses to domestic violence. Approximately 500 judges who had participated in these judicial education workshops reported significant follow-up improvements in their judicial responses in local courts and communities:

- Two-thirds of the participants said that this judicial education provided them with the tools they needed in domestic violence cases.
- Almost all of the participating judges indicated that this training helped them enhance victim safety.
- The vast majority of judges indicated that the training helped them enhance their efforts to hold batterers accountable.
- The participating judges indicated that they had a better understanding of how cultural considerations factored into structuring appropriate sentences or civil remedies.
- The majority of judges also reported that this judicial education helped them improve their judicial leadership in the community.

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Janet Carter, Futures Without Violence (formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund), DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, CHILD ABUSE, AND YOUTH VIOLENCE: STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION (2003), available at <http://www.mincava.umn.edu/link/documents/fvpf2/fvpf2.shtml>.

<sup>4</sup> NCJFCJ, *The Civil Protection Order Review Hearing: A Tool for Accountability*, JUVENILE AND FAMILY JUSTICE TODAY at 26 (2011).

As the top leader of a local court's justice system, each judge affects the lives of thousands of community members and influences dozens of justice system professionals annually. Think of the impact we can have on the country if we could provide all of our nation's courts with similar training and resources. Before VAWA judicial education was implemented, too many family courts simply issued emergency protective orders, with no further follow up. Now, the courts that have had the benefit of VAWA's National Judicial Institute training have the tools they need to ensure that all relevant divisions of court are engaged in keeping the community's families safe.

In this most recent reauthorization of VAWA, Congress has recognized the unique role of judges in helping family violence victims find safety and holding accountable those who use violence against family members. Judges provide leadership in their communities and are often the only professionals able to pull together resources from public agencies and the community.

VAWA addresses the work of courts in four separate provisions:

First, the STOP state formula grant dollars allocate 5% of the STOP funding going to the states to local courts. This supports the training of judicial personnel, as well as providing funding for improved court databases.

Second, S. 1925 consolidates provisions from three existing programs, by repealing two programs and rolling some of their provisions into a third existing program, thereby creating a more streamlined and cost-effective court funding program. This is an important and helpful change. Not only does it save the federal government money, but it allows court applicants to apply for one, rather than three grant programs, ensuring that successful applicants are able to carry out much more comprehensive work in one grant.

Third, S. 1925 continues the reauthorization of the program providing Training for Court Personnel on Child Welfare, as VAWA has done since 1994. This program is small at only \$2.3 million, but it supports the work of more than 30 state courts. The impact is huge. In just three of the courts participating in this program (New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago) federal and state government has benefitted from averted costs totaling \$1.3 billion in just one year.

Fourth, the Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program is well-known for leveraging thousands of volunteer hours every year to enable the court systems to address the needs of children facing abuse. This program is traditionally reauthorized in VAWA.

Finally, the funds provided to help VAWA grantees implement best practices would support the National Judicial Institute training that helps our nation's judges to enhance the safety of domestic violence victims, hold batterers more accountable, and exercise local community

leadership in the struggle to end and prevent domestic, sexual, and dating violence as well as stalking.

VAWA also supports NCJFCJ's judicial training on other, community-related issues, such as the needs of immigrant victims in the courtroom. This is training that NCJFCJ offers because we have heard from so many judges who expressed concern that immigrant victims were not coming forward for fear of deportation—instead enduring escalating victimization and abuse.

Part of this judicial training addresses U visas and educates judicial personnel about U visas' effectiveness at getting victims to work with law enforcement and prosecution in the investigation of the case. Without U visas, courts may not hear the evidence needed for a sound, reasoned decision. Our judges believe that it is crucial for local law enforcement and prosecution to be trained on how the U Visa process assists with investigation and prosecution.

Judges have a unique responsibility in our nation's communities. Courts are at the forefront of state and local efforts to keep families and communities safe. Without the support of the VAWA courts programs and provisions, the training, resources and community coordination needed to appropriately address family violence could not continue. I urge you to bring this message to the Members of Congress you work for: support the swift reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act now.

**Debi Cain, Executive Director, Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board**

My name is Debi Cain and I am the VAWA Administrator for Michigan and a Board member of AVA – The Association of VAWA Administrators – representing 50 states and 6 territories.

AVA thanks Congress for their foresight in the creation of ongoing support of VAWA.

On behalf of AVA we want Congress to know how seriously we take our funding responsibility for VAWA dollars. We see first-hand the incredible difference the VAWA dollars make in the lives of victims/survivors in our states and we know how precious those dollars are.

State VAWA Administrators work diligently to ensure and monitor the wise expenditure of VAWA dollars in a victim centered manner. State Administrators also recognize the importance of ensuring that these victim-centered services reflect the many faces of victims in our states and the unique needs of each and every one of those victims.

Especially in these difficult economic times, it is critical that each and every dollar of VAWA is made to count. State Administrator accountability is ever-present because we know that the wise use of VAWA dollars can literally save lives.

In preparation for today's testimony, 2/3 of AVA members responded to a poll. Wish to share those results.

### State Planning Process

- Inclusive of victim service organizations, professionals, police, courts
- Benchbook, Professional and police manuals (collaborate)
- Many states also require local planning and memorandums of understanding.
- Establish priority areas reflective of now.

### Competitive Bid Process

- Nearly all states prescribe a multi-level competitive process w/ rigorous review mechanisms.
- Involvement of contracting /fiscal agents of state VAWA agency.
- Review team rates & recommendations.

### Monitoring / QA / TA – All three!!!

Nearly all states have regularly scheduled on-site reviews of grantees.

Michigan as an example:

State Board legislated for in-depth monitoring (By-laws / minutes / files and confidentiality / fiscal)

Peer teams and legal staff.

Contract reviews:

Statistics / contract terms / fiscal

Monthly desk audits on fiscal / risk management

Accountability and quality go hand-in-hand.

Are survivors getting the services they need and deserve?

Are all survivors served and reflective of their community?

What TA is needed?

Quarterly grantee meetings (ADs / CJTAC)

TA is critical – Fiscal / Contracting

Professional (PAAM / Coalition / MCOLES / MSP / MJI / Etc. . .)

## Best and Promising Practices

On behalf of myself and all my VAWA Administration colleagues – AVA – We thank you for your support of these critical VAWA dollars. We share your commitment to this important work and absolutely take seriously a charge to ensure that these precious dollars are spent wisely and accountably.

### **Rev. Dr. Anne Marie Hunter, Director, Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence**

Good morning, my name is Anne Marie Hunter. I am a United Methodist pastor, and the Director of Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence.

I am here this morning to give you a glimpse of a pre-VAWA world in order to illustrate the critical impact that VAWA has had since its authorization in 1984.

I was a victim of domestic violence before 1984. Of course, I didn't know I was a victim of domestic violence, because we simply didn't know words like "domestic violence," "battered woman," or "power and control." So, my life was falling apart, but I couldn't even name what was happening to me.

At the same time, I was sure that I was the only one this had ever happened to. I knew that because no one ever talked about a problem like mine. There were no posters, no books, no videos, nothing. So, I was convinced that it was something that I was doing wrong that made this happen.

When the situation became really unbearable, I, like many people, turned first to my faith community for help. It turned out that my priest had already talked to my husband. When I arrived, the priest began by asking me why I had "abandoned my marriage." When I tried to explain what was going on, the priest didn't understand. He said that he had talked to my husband, who had confessed everything. He had even had a "religious conversion," and had promised to never hurt me again. The priest had forgiven him, and now it was my turn to "forgive and forget," go back home, and make the marriage work.

I wasn't convinced that my husband had changed, though. I had heard too many empty promises. When I told the priest that I didn't think it was safe to go back, he became frustrated with me. Finally, in the face of my apparent stubbornness, he said, "You must not be a Christian, because you don't believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to change people." I left that day broken in body, mind, and spirit.

Because this is a pre-VAWA world, there were no shelters, so I stayed with friends. I had to move every couple days, though, because my husband would discover where I was staying

and begin pounding on the front door and calling incessantly. Politely, my friends would ask me to leave, because “he seems dangerous.”

I moved into a small apartment, and he found that quickly too. One night, he was at the front door, pounding loudly and shouting to me to let him in. On the advice of a friend, I called the police, who came and walked him around the block. In 15 minutes, he was back.

A safety plan would have been helpful, but there was no hotline or shelter, so no one to help me with that. So I made my own safety plan. It involved a deadbolt on the inside of my bedroom door, sleeping curled around the phone, and a rope ladder at the bottom of my second-story window. I thought if he pounded down the front door I could get out the window before he got through the bedroom door. The plan, after I climbed down from the window, was to run, although I have no idea where I would have run.

There were no support groups, but a friend at work referred me to her private therapist. During the first and only hour I was there, the therapist said, “He’s Eastern European, of course he’s violent! They’re all violent.” I didn’t go back.

There were no court advocates either. I remember telling my divorce lawyer how scared I was that I would get kicked out of my apartment because of the late-night screaming and pounding on the door, and how my employer had to move me to another office due to my husband’s ongoing harassment. The lawyer said something about “getting an order from the court” to make him stop. I looked her in the eye and asked if that would require talking about what was going on in public. When she said “yes,” I refused to go. I was too ashamed, too overwhelmed, too intimidated to talk about this in public. And it was a small town; everyone in the courtroom would know me. There was no way I could do that.

I could go on and on, but I think you get the pre-VAWA picture. For me, leaving abuse meant being alone, unsafe, terrified, and broken.

Despite the odds, I survived. I healed. I even thrived. Several years later, I enrolled at Harvard Divinity School to study religion. For the first time, I encountered other survivors, and even other survivors who had struggled with their faith communities. They all had stories like mine. One woman said, “I turned the other cheek, and turned the other cheek, until I ran out of faces.”

In 1991, I founded Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence, in response to all the women who had “run out of faces.” We work tirelessly to educate religious leaders – rabbis, priests, imams, pastors, ministers, lay leaders – about DV and how important the faith community response is.

In 2003 Safe Havens was invited to provide national Technical Assistance on faith community outreach and education to the VAWA-funded Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) in the U.S. Department of Justice. Right now, through OVW, we are working with rural service providers to help them reach out to their local faith communities regarding domestic and sexual violence. We are also partnering with the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life to work on elder abuse and faith. We also help advocates and faith communities collaborate.

Whether it's elder abuse in Cincinnati, sexual violence in rural Sitka, or domestic violence in an immigrant community in Boston, faith communities can be a life-giving access point for support, information, and referrals. It is critical that we include faith communities at the table because:

1. That's one place victims and survivors turn for help.
2. In low-income; rural; refugee; and religious, racial, and ethnic minority communities, the faith community is vital, central, and critical to a community-wide response to sexual and domestic violence. In some communities, faith communities are the only institutions available to help. And a Canadian study reports that the majority of older victims name a faith community when asked where they would turn for help with abuse.

Fortunately, this VAWA Re-Authorization recognizes the critical role of faith community leaders in a coordinated community response to domestic and sexual violence.

So, here's a glimpse of a VAWA world, a world you can support and vote to continue. Several years ago, an Hispanic woman in Chelsea, MA called her priest in the middle of the night, in the middle of a violent incident. Fr. Ortiz told me that before being trained he would have gone over to the house, tried to calm everyone down, and scheduled couple's counseling for the next morning. It's hard to imagine a more dangerous response for the victim, or the priest himself!

However, Fr. Ortiz had been trained by Safe Havens, in part with VAWA funds. So, he encouraged the victim to call the police. They had been trained through VAWA funds too, so they identified and arrested the perpetrator. Then the priest went to the home to support the victim. He referred her to local services, which are also VAWA-funded. She joined a support group there. The VAWA-funded court advocate helped her get a restraining order. Her children received support and counseling. Today she is safe, free, and whole.

There is a long way to go to make this VAWA world a reality for everyone. We are just beginning to build an adequate response to elder abuse, for example. Yesterday, I heard of an Adult Protective Services advocate who said that he is responding to the "worst case of physical abuse he has ever seen." The perpetrator is an adult son. The survivor asked him to

call two people: her other son, and her pastor. I can only hope and pray that her pastor has been trained to respond safely and effectively.

On behalf of all victims and survivors, our grandmothers and grandfathers, our mothers and fathers, and our sons and daughters, I exhort you to re-authorize the Violence Against Women Act. We ALL deserve to live safe, free, and whole.

**Monika Johnson Hostler, Executive Director, North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault; and President, National Alliance to End Sexual Violence**

My name is Monika Johnson Hostler and I am the Executive Director of the NC Coalition Against Sexual Assault and the President of the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV).

NAESV is excited to be here and part of the NTF—the 56 state sexual assault coalitions and the 1300 rape crisis centers we work with are very excited about VAWA legislation. Through all of the tragic stories that have come to light this year, we believe our national is ready to truly take a stand on the issue of sexual violence—and this VAWA can give us some very important tools to do that.

Over the last 17 years, VAWA has been changed the lives of survivors and created systems and infrastructure to respond to sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. While the journey has provided major successes, there is still work to do. The infrastructure and criminal justice response for sexual assault still needs the resources provided by VAWA. NAESV has several priorities that include:

- Reauthorizes RPE—working in schools, college campuses, work place and government to create the paradigm shift needed to end sexual violence.
- Improves criminal justice response- through expanded purpose areas that allows law enforcement and prosecutors to use funding to further increase the criminal justice response
- Protects victims of sexual assault in public housing- allowing public housing authority to assist victims of sexual assault in moving to ensure their physical and mental safety

Thank you to Chairmen Smith and Ranking Member Conyers for working so closely with the task force as we move forward with ensuring the journey for VAWA doesn't end here but the journey continues to save lives.

**Framework for the bill and how we influenced that:** One of the outstanding aspects of this reauthorization of VAWA is the extent to which advocates and victims from across the country provided input. Over two years ago, more than 2,000 advocates responded to surveys

and national conference calls to name the most pressing issues facing victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Twenty-two issue committees were convened to work through the responses and prioritize the most important issues for victims from all walks of life. This extensive input provided the foundation for the drafting of S. 1925 and we trust it will for the House legislation as well.

**Why this is a reasonable bill:** We've worked to offer VAWA language that is reasonable, Cost effective, streamlined, accountable—worth the investment. Repealed 12 programs, consolidated 9 into 3, reduced authorizations by 166 million.

Need the federal government as a full partner—advocates welcome the participation of the federal government.

Urgency for reauthorizing the bill—communities rely on VAWA to provide advocates to go emergency rooms with rape victims, shelter to battered women, hotlines for young people, legal support for stalking victims—VAWA has expired, and your communities are worried—they are already facing shrinking donations and local and state funding—they want to know that you stand with them in their hard day to day work—without much pay and with too much to do—and swiftly reauthorizing this bill is the best way for Senators to show that support.

**Thank you staff for coming to this briefing and we look forward to future conversations on how your Members can help us move VAWA swiftly through the House.**

Recognized specific people in the room and their availability to help with certain issues in VAWA—asked Title Chiefs to stand.

VAWA is an invaluable resource to build capacity for states and local communities to gain a foothold in addressing domestic violence, dating violence sexual assault and stalking; and we hope you will be as passionate about the swift reauthorization of VAWA as we are.

For more information visit [www.4vawa.org](http://www.4vawa.org)