

January 26, 2012

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of our faith-based organizations, representing millions of people of faith in all 50 states across our nation, we are writing today in strong support of the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) this Congress. VAWA is our nation's single most effective tool in responding to the devastating crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking and provides lifesaving programs and services.

Since the original passage of VAWA in 1994, the legislation has dramatically enhanced our nation's response to violence against women. More victims report domestic violence to the police; the rate of non-fatal intimate partner violence against women has decreased by 63%; and VAWA saved nearly \$14.8 billion in net averted social costs in just its first six years. But violent crimes against women are still perpetrated each day. According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey recently released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 1 in 5 women has been raped in her lifetime and nearly 1 in 4 women has been a victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner. Clearly, a continued, strong national response is necessary to end this crisis.

As representatives of diverse faith traditions, we are committed to ensuring that all women live without fear of violence. In times of crisis, victims often turn to their faith communities and leaders for guidance and support. Faith leaders are on the front lines each day identifying victims, providing refuge, referring victims and their families to VAWA programs and services, and offering hope and healing. We believe that VAWA reauthorization gives lawmakers an opportunity to build upon previous successes and make critical improvements to meet the changing needs of victims and provide more avenues for assistance and support.

Thank you for your steadfast commitment to working with faith communities to support victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. We look forward to working with you to swiftly reauthorize VAWA this Congress. Please contact Miri Cypers at Jewish Women International at mcypers@jwi.org or 202 857 1300 for additional information.

Sincerely,

American Jewish Committee
Alliance of Baptists
Apostolic Catholic Church
Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies
Catholics for Family Peace Committee
Christian Reformed Church in North America
Church Women United

Council on American-Islamic Relations
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Evangelicals for Social Action
FaithTrust Institute
Global Justice Institute
Hindu American Seva Charities
IMA World Health
Interfaith Community Against Domestic Violence
Islamic Circle of North America
Islamic Relief USA
Islamic Social Services Association- USA
Islamic Society of North America
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Reconstructionist Federation
Jewish Women International
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
Metropolitan Community Churches
Muslim Public Affairs Council
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Catholic Women
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
National Council of Jewish Women
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Peaceful Families Project
Pentecostals & Charismatics for Peace & Justice
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Public Witness
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence
Sojourners
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Women
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society
Women of Reform Judaism
World Sikh Council (American Region)