



COALITION TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS GLOBALLY

Pass the International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA)

One out of every three women worldwide will be physically, sexually or otherwise abused during her lifetime—with rates reaching 70 percent in some countries. This type of violence ranges from rape to domestic violence and child marriage to so-called “honor killings.” Violence against women and girls is a human rights violation, a public health epidemic, and a barrier to solving global challenges such as extreme poverty, HIV/AIDS and conflict. Violence against women and girls also has an economic cost to both household incomes and broader economic development around the world. Gender-based violence (GBV) occurs in peacetime and in conflict and knows no national or cultural barriers.

The bipartisan **International Violence Against Women Act (H.R.1340/S.713)**, also known as **IVAWA**, makes ending violence against women and girls a top diplomatic, development, and foreign assistance priority by ensuring the U.S. government has a strategy to efficiently and effectively coordinate **existing** cross-governmental efforts to prevent and respond to GBV globally. IVAWA would ensure transparency by putting in place Congressional oversight of U.S. GBV initiatives that have been ongoing for years. Key to this accountability are two positions that would be tasked with overseeing a GBV strategy: the Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment at USAID and the State Department’s Office of Global Women’s Issues with the position of Ambassador-at-Large. **These entities exist within the current agency structure, having first been established in the early 2000’s.**

IVAWA will streamline and better coordinate anti-GBV programming across various U.S. government agencies. **Since this legislation is aimed at coordinating and integrating existing programs, it does not require the appropriation of additional funding.** More specifically, the IVAWA would do the following:

Change Social Norms to Prevent Gender-based Violence:

IVAWA focuses on preventing violence by transforming social norms about the acceptability of it. IVAWA recognizes that while women and girls disproportionately suffer from violence, men and boys experience targeted violence too. The bill intentionally utilizes the term GBV throughout, making it inclusive of all persons and not precluding programs from supporting men and boys. IVAWA will support public awareness programs to change attitudes that condone, and at times encourage, violence against women and girls, as well as men and boys, and will emphasize community-based solutions.

Increase Legal and Judicial Protection to Address Gender-based Violence:

IVAWA focuses on establishing and supporting laws and legal that help prevent and appropriately respond to all forms of GBV. Emphasis is placed on promoting political, legal, and institutional reforms that recognize such violence as a crime and train police and the judiciary to hold violators accountable and to respond to the needs of survivors.

Increase Health Sector Capacity to Address Gender-based Violence:

IVAWA will integrate programs to address gender-based violence into already existing health programs focused on child survival, health, and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. It takes a holistic “systems” approach and emphasizes enhanced health sector capacity to assess the impact of violence on health and help protect individuals from violence.

Increase Women’s Economic Opportunity and Education:

IVAWA focuses on reducing women and girls’ vulnerability to violence by improving their economic status and educational opportunities. Emphasis is placed on ensuring women’s access to job training and employment opportunities and increasing their right to own land and property. The legislation also addresses the rights of women and girls to work and go to school free of sexual coercion and assault.

To cosponsor this legislation, please contact Andrew.Goczowski@mail.house.gov, in Rep. Schakowsky’s Office, Nick.Czajka@mail.house.gov, in Rep. Gibson’s Office, Ariana_Reks@boxer.senate.gov, in Senator Boxer’s Office, or Jill_Carney@collins.senate.gov, in Senator Collins’ Office.

For more information, please contact any of the Coalition Co-chairs:

Julia Drost
Amnesty International USA
jdrost@aiusa.org

Christine Hart
Women Thrive Worldwide
chart@womenthrive.org

Leila Milani
Futures Without Violence
lmilani@futureswithoutviolence.org

Ben Weingrod
CARE USA
bweingrod@care.org