

Module 7.2 –Policy analysis and recommendation paper

Southern New Hampshire University

HSE-330-X3934

Samiyah Muhammad

February 26th, 2023

Professor Kelly

Module 7.2 – Policy analysis and recommendation paper

Background

Working as a victim advocate for Arizona Coalition To End Sexual And Domestic Violence, it is our mission to “To end sexual and domestic violence in Arizona by dismantling oppression and promoting equity among all people.” (ACESDV, 2021). In our effort to end violence against women and children, we make a conscience effort to ensure legislative changes are within reach. Although there had been federal mandates in place to help alleviate the strain felt by victims and civil servants alike, the Violence Against Women Act still had room for improvement. Thus, there were progressive plans and changes made to the act by former President Obama, but the revised Act has not yet been reauthorized. When closely examining the Violence Against Women Act ("VAWA") of 1994 and its revisions in 1996, 2000 and 2005, it can be noted that the Act was beneficial politically, socially, and economically for victims of domestic violence. There have been many societal changes since the last successful amendment to this legislative act in 2005, but the authorization is needed now more than ever.

The bill first came into the consideration in the early 90's, but was successfully passed in 1994. Since the initial approval of the Act, the amendments made in 1996 added additional mandates which included officially recognizing domestic violence as a federal crime. These changes also included “...changes to the *Gun Control Act*... to possess a firearm and/or ammunition while subject to a qualifying protection Order; and to possess a firearm and/or ammunition after conviction of a qualifying misdemeanor crime of domestic violence.”(*Federal Domestic Violence Laws*, 2020b). In the following years after consistent reauthorization, more additions were added in the years of 2000 and 2005. These changes included the creation of the

National Domestic Violence Hotline, funding for shelters and safe houses, and legal protections for victims of these heinous assaults.

With a recent uptick in the national rate of sex crimes and domestic violence due in-part to the COVID-19 Pandemic, victims lost steady means of financial independence and access to help due to lockdown and the aftermath. IPV has also increased for particular minority communities, which had already been disregarded in the past. According to the research and data compiled in (Human Rights Campaign, 2020) “However, since passage of the 2013 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the LGBTQ community has been recognized as an underserved population and is entitled to be protected from discrimination by service providers.” Considering that religious freedom is a hot topic for both parties, but more so the republican party, there are many reasons the revised act could be neglected. Since 2016, the separation between politics and religion have become blurred.

When Evangelical religious leader Jerry Falwell Jr. publically endorsed then Presidential candidate Donald J. Trump, lobbying efforts to discontinue the Act became clear. Although the legislation was passed through the House after its lapse in 2019, the VAWA did not have enough support on from Congress to be reauthorized. LGBTQ issues and gun policies are two of the most controversial political hot topics. Which means, members of the NRA and Evangelical believers are both social and political supporters who could sway some Republican leaders to withhold support of the revised VAWA. “...Iowa Senator Joni Ernst, a domestic violence survivor, has been working to reauthorize VAWA since it expired. Its reauthorization had been stalled by controversial provisions like stricter gun restrictions, which some of her fellow Republicans oppose. "It is frustrating because I did work in a shelter environment," Ernst said. "This is not a gun control bill. It is a violence against women bill..." (Killion, 2021).

Position

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was officially reenacted on international women's day, March 8th, 2022. This Act was originally brought to the attention of white house officials in 1993 and was successfully passed by both the House and Senate in 1994. This remarkable piece of legislation was created to help reduce incidents of domestic violence and to provide victims with protection. Although it may seem to be common knowledge for victims and their loved ones, according to (United Nations, n.d.) "Domestic abuse, also called "domestic violence" or "intimate partner violence", can be defined as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person." The 1980s were the era that began to expose the horrors of domestic violence thanks in part to the famous work of Donna Ferrato in 1982.

Although Ferrato's infamous photograph from the Times Behind Closed Doors, magazine spread, domestic violence has long been a normal part of history which has often been overlooked. VAWA was inspired by Ferrato and the help of community-based initiatives such as the Battered Wives publication released in 1976. With the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence founded in 1978 and the United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Violence Against Women. Given the horrendous history tied to the issue of domestic violence, Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence stands firmly behind the Violence Against Women Act. The revised Act is economically, socially, and politically beneficial for victims of both domestic and

sexual violence. With the Biden-Harris administration providing 1 billion dollars in funding for shelters and safe houses, victims can have a safe and undisclosed location to begin rebuilding their lives while keeping themselves and their children safe.

Considering that victims in the past have been wrongfully arrested or even tried and convicted for defending themselves from their predators, survivors may have difficulty legally owning protection. The least beneficial clause within the act is “Enacting the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Denial Notification Act to help state law enforcement investigate and prosecute cases against individuals legally prohibited from purchasing firearms who try to do so.” House, T. W. (2022, March 16). However, the new revisions to the act have become more inclusive than ever. Indigenous and LGBTQ communities have been disregarded in the past due to potential lobbying efforts and lack of public support, but times have changed immensely. Now, there is a federal effort to support the safe recovery of missing and sexually exploited Indigenous women. Also, gender-based violence is not excluded from domestic abuse due to being involved in same-sex relationships.

As mentioned above, the lack of specifics regarding background checks and exclusions for the purchase of firearms is concerning for ACESDV. We believe there should be legal retribution for survivors who have received unjust charges or apprehension to better protect themselves from potential stalking or attacks. Also, with the rate of abuse other minority communities face, there should be specifics for African-American and Disabled victims of sexual and domestic violence. Aside from the grievances mentioned, the new revised Act is wonderfully suited for protecting and providing resources for survivors. According to (Center, 2020) “...More than 40% of Black women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime...” and (Families, 2022), “...70% of

disabled people experience some form of abuse and are three times more likely to be sexually assaulted.”

To put it plainly, the Violence Against Women Act is one of the most critical components to keeping survivors safe from their predators. Although there is room for further improvement, ACESDV is a supporter of keeping women and children safe from danger in their homes. COVID-19 has changed the many societal norms, including views of domestic abuse. VAWA continues to push out mission forward, and we will continue to fight alongside our brave leaders.

Stakeholders and Coalitions

The Violence Against Women Act of 2022 has many supporters in the various forms. From States sponsored coalitions, to community grassroots organizations, plenty of entities has good reason to stand with federal efforts. However, for the amount of support received, there are also a great deal of organizations who stand to gain more without the bill's presences. Arizona's Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence does currently agree with the revisions for the reauthorized act. With that said, we firmly believe that all communities deserve the proper access to resources and protection for as many community members as possible. We believe that the revisions are an excellent start, but our work is far from over.

Currently, the percentage of disabled individuals who have survived or are actively lively under duress can be prevented. According to (*Domestic Violence and People With Disabilities*, 2018) “A survey conducted by the Spectrum Institute Disability and Abuse Project found that 70% of respondents with disabilities experienced some form of abuse by an intimate partner, family member, caregiver, acquaintance or stranger.” When taking into account statistics such as these,

we must work harder to provide more resources for disabled community members. The VAWA of 2022 has plenty of supporters including Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and American Psychological Association to name a few. With the help of “Community stakeholders include, but are not limited to: victim advocates, police officers, prosecutors, judges, probation and corrections officials, health care professionals, leaders within faith communities, and survivors.” (U.S. Department of Justice, 2016), the stipulations of the bill are enacted even on a local and state wide level.

Celebrities have also begun to openly share their stories and advocate for widening audiences and spreading awareness. With the voices of prominent individuals such as Phylicia Rashad, Vivica A. Fox, Angelina Jolie, Matt Dillion, Omar Epps, and Tony Hawk domestic and sexual violence awareness has grown substantially. Alas, there is a large number of republicans who have voted against the bill, to be exact 172 House representatives opposed. The reason for their reservations regarding the new changes revolved around personal principles regarding the 2nd amendment and possible religious values. One specific issue is referred to as “...the closure of the so-called "boyfriend loophole." The closure of the loophole would extend the ban on abusers being allowed to own or buy a firearm.” (J. Walker, 2021).

Survivors have long been a driving force in the advocacy and progression of the VAWA implementation and adjustments for the 2000, 2005, 2013 and 2022 revisions. From the efforts of speaking out and sharing their personal experiences of intimate partner violence, stalking, and sexual violence community advocacy is the foundation of the origins for VAWA. As mentioned before, there can be more specifications made, especially for disabled individuals within our nation. The best ways to provide better protection for disabled victims of domestic violence, stalking and sexual violence would be to ensure that law enforcement officials are actively

responding to their calls. “Despite its prevalence, domestic abuse against disabled people is often overlooked, with 70% to 85% of cases of abuse going unreported. That number is even higher for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities...” (Families, 2022).

The best way to ensure the concerns of disabled domestic violence victims would be to add a specified clause within both the VAWA and ADA legislations upon reauthorization. By making proper resources for survivors a right for all Americans with disabilities, this will help reduce chances of abuse by authorities, abusers and medical care givers. “Police are less likely to respond to reported violence against victims with disabilities than they are to reported violence against victims without disabilities. Police respond to 90% of reports by victims without disabilities and 77% of reports by victims with disabilities.” (Sharpe, 2022).

References:

100 Celebrities “Join the List” to Raise Awareness of Violence. (2017, April 27).

<https://www.justice.gov/archives/ovw/blog/100-celebrities-join-list-raise-awareness-violence-against-women>

Center, B. (2020, February 26). *Black Women & Domestic Violence.* Blackburncenter.

<https://www.blackburncenter.org/post/2020/02/26/black-women-domestic-violence>

Changing Attitudes About Domestic Violence | Office of Justice Programs. (n.d.).

<https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/changing-attitudes-about-domestic-violence>

Domestic Violence and People with Disabilities. (2018, March 13). National Coalition Against

Domestic Violence. <https://ncadv.org/blog/posts/domestic-violence-and-people-with-disabilities>

Families, S. F. (2022, July 28). *The Links Between Disability & Domestic Violence*. Sanctuary for Families. <https://sanctuaryforfamilies.org/disability-domestic-violence/>

History of Intimate Partner Violence Reform | Freedom and Citizenship. (n.d.).

<https://freedomandcitizenship.columbia.edu/ipv-history>

House, T. W. (2022, March 16). *Fact Sheet: Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)*. The White House. [https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/16/fact-sheet-reauthorization-of-the-violence-against-women-act-vawa/)

[releases/2022/03/16/fact-sheet-reauthorization-of-the-violence-against-women-act-vawa/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/16/fact-sheet-reauthorization-of-the-violence-against-women-act-vawa/)

Macke, J. (2022, February 10). *Angelina Jolie Chokes Up While Advocating for Domestic Violence Victims Alongside Daughter Zahara*. Us Weekly.

<https://www.usmagazine.com/celebrity-news/news/angelina-jolie-tearfully-supports-domestic-violence-victims/>

New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence. (n.d.). <https://www.nyscadv.org/>

Sharpe, A. L. (2022, February 15). *Supporting the introduction of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act in the Senate*. American Psychological Association. [https://Domestic](https://DomesticViolenceandPeoplewithDisabilities.org/)

[Violence and People with Disabilities](https://DomesticViolenceandPeoplewithDisabilities.org/). (2018, March 13). National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. <https://ncadv.org/blog/posts/domestic-violence-and-people-with-disabilities>

Taylor, J. (2016, January 26). *Trump Nabs Endorsement of Evangelical Leader*. 91.5 KJZZ NPR.

<https://www.npr.org/2016/01/26/464435834/trump-nabs-endorsement-of-top-evangelical-leader>

Tribal Coalitions. (n.d.). <https://www.vawamei.org/grant-program/tribal-coalitions/>

United Nations. (n.d.). *What Is Domestic Abuse?* <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/what-is-domestic-abuse>

U.S. Department of Justice. (2016, June). *About The Office Of Violence Against Women*. Office on the Violence Against Women.

<https://www.justice.gov/file/29836/download#:~:text=Community%20stakeholders%20include%2C%20but%20are,within%20faith%20communities%2C%20and%20survivors.>

Violence Against Women Act - VAWA. (n.d.). City of Glendale.

https://www.glendaleaz.com/live/city_services/citizen_assistance_programs/public_housing_programs/violence_against_womenactvawa

Walker, J. (2021, March 18). *Full List of 172 Republicans Who Opposed the Violence Against Women Act.* Newsweek. <https://www.newsweek.com/full-list-172-republicans-opposed-violence-against-women-act-1577029>

References:

Changing Attitudes About Domestic Violence | Office of Justice Programs. (n.d.).

<https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/changing-attitudes-about-domestic-violence>

Center, B. (2020, February 26). Black Women & Domestic Violence. Blackburncenter.

<https://www.blackburncenter.org/post/2020/02/26/black-women-domestic-violence>

Cooney, S. (2016, November 17). This Photograph Put a Face on the Epidemic of Domestic Violence. Time. <https://time.com/4575229/donna-ferrato-domestic-violence-photo/>

Families, S. F. (2022, July 28). The Links Between Disability & Domestic Violence. Sanctuary for Families. <https://sanctuaryforfamilies.org/disability-domestic-violence/>

History of Intimate Partner Violence Reform | Freedom and Citizenship. (n.d.).

<https://freedomandcitizenship.columbia.edu/ipv-history>

House, T. W. (2022, March 16). Fact Sheet: Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). The White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/16/fact-sheet-reauthorization-of-the-violence-against-women-act-vawa/>

New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence. (n.d.). <https://www.nyscadv.org/>

United Nations. (n.d.). What Is Domestic Abuse? <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/what-is-domestic-abuse>

Wall of Silence - Donna Ferrato Photography. (n.d.). DONNA FERRATO PHOTOGRAPHY. <https://www.donnaferrato.com/wall-of-silence>

References:

ACESDV. (2021, November 17). *Who We Are* | ACESDV. ACESDV | End Sexual & Domestic Violence. <https://www.acesdv.org/who-we-are/>

Federal Domestic Violence Laws. (2020b, May 26). <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdtn/victim-witness-program/federal-domestic-violence-laws>

Federal Domestic Violence. (2021, December 23). <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndga/victim-witness-assistance/federal-domestic-violence>

Killion, N. (2021, December 31). *Survivors and lawmakers urge Congress to reauthorize Violence Against Women Act years after it expired*. CBS News.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/violence-against-women-act-reauthorization-joni-ernst/>

LGBTQ People are More Likely to Experience IPV. (2020, June 25). Human Rights Campaign.

<https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/report-shows-lgbtq-people-are-more-likely-to-be-victims-of-interpersonal-vi>

Taylor, J. (2016, January 26). *Trump Nabs Endorsement of Evangelical Leader*. 91.5 KJZZ NPR.

<https://www.npr.org/2016/01/26/464435834/trump-nabs-endorsement-of-top-evangelical-leader>