

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 7, 2012

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Conyers
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Conyers,

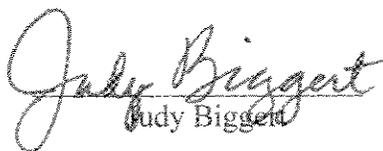
We support a bipartisan reauthorization of the 1994 landmark Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). VAWA is long overdue for renewal.

The Violence Against Women Act recognizes the insidious and pervasive nature of domestic violence. With each reauthorization, Congress has worked carefully to craft improved, enhanced, and accountable programs and services, as well as comprehensive community responses, with the goal of providing *effective and cost saving* assistance to victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking crimes. Law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, health professionals, counselors, educators and service providers efficiently use VAWA programs to hold offenders accountable and keep communities safe. Recent studies estimate that VAWA has saved more than \$12.6 billion dollars in net averted economic and social costs to our families and our communities.

While VAWA programs have saved countless lives and greatly enhanced systemic changes to meet the needs of victims, key improvements are necessary to meet the law's original intent. VAWA's reauthorization must build upon its successes and continue progress towards breaking the cycle and culture of violence by streamlining programs, enhancing criminal justice responses for sexual assault victims, and strengthening prevention programs for young people. VAWA must reach all victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking in every community in the country.

The Violence Against Women Act is a critical component of our public safety network. Its reauthorization is directly tied to the safety of our schools, workplaces, and communities. We urge the Judiciary Committee to consider key improvements to meet the needs of all victims in a bipartisan VAWA reauthorization.

Sincerely,


Judy Biggett


Mike Quigley

Jan. Meyer

D. Richter

Ch. W. Dent

R. F. D.

Patricia M. M.

Charles F. Bass