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May 16, 2012

WASHINGTON – Congressman Charles F. Bass (NH-02) issued the following statement today after the House of Representatives passed legislation to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) (H.R. 4970). Since the Senate passed different legislation at the end of April, the House and Senate must now reconcile their differing bills in a committee of conference.

Bass said:

"Reauthorizing this important legislation – a key component of our public safety network to help prevent violence against women, children, and all individuals – should not and cannot be a partisan issue. I have said all along that we can find common ground to work together on a bipartisan bill, like the Senate did, to protect victims of abuse. I'm disappointed that we were not able to accomplish that in the House today.

"After studying this legislation carefully and working with New Hampshire organizations that assist victims of violence, I could not support this particular bill. I have serious concerns that H.R. 4970 does not adequately protect all victims. I am also troubled by the direct impact that this legislation would have on the crisis centers in New Hampshire that helped hundreds of victims in our state last year alone.

"As both the House and Senate bills head to a conference committee, I hope we can work out a bipartisan compromise that gives law enforcement, prosecutors, health professionals, and service providers the tools they need to hold offenders accountable and keep our communities safe."

Kim France, the Executive Director of the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, said, "The New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (NHCADSV) and our 14 member programs thank Congressman Bass for his work on this issue and his support of a bipartisan approach to reauthorizing this bill. VAWA is so important to our work in New Hampshire to help all victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking, and we urge the House and Senate to work together on a bipartisan solution."

Bass has been a strong supporter of reauthorizing VAWA in a bipartisan manner. Last week, he joined seven of his Republican and Democratic colleagues in sending a letter to the House Judiciary Committee urging the Chairman and Ranking Member to move on a bipartisan bill.

Bass is also the lead Republican cosponsor of the bipartisan Violence Against Women Health Initiative Act (H.R. 1578), which reauthorizes three existing health programs within VAWA that are designed to strengthen the health care system's response to and identification of victims through an enhanced public health response to abuse.

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