



National Task Force to End Sexual & Domestic Violence



H.R.1585, The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019: A Mini-Toolkit for Passionate People

This miniature toolkit is designed for individuals who care deeply about preventing and responding to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking but who do not have the capacity to engage in more robust outreach.

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The Violence Against Women Act of 2019

What is H.R.1585?

H.R.1585, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019, is a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (“VAWA”) for five years. H.R.1585, introduced by Representative Karen Bass (D-CA-37) and Representative Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-01), makes modest yet vital improvements that are necessary to prevent domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking and to hold offenders accountable.

Why do we need to reauthorize VAWA every five years?

First, we don’t need to reauthorize all of VAWA - only the grant programs need to be reauthorized. Interstate domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking do not become legal, just because VAWA is unauthorized, nor does special tribal jurisdiction go away. Inconvenient as it seems, reauthorizing programs is actually beneficial, because it allows us to make updates. We learn more every year about the best ways to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, and the reauthorization process allows us to make use of that knowledge.

Why can’t we just stay with the VAWA we have now?

Every time they have reauthorized VAWA, Congress has made vital, and often groundbreaking, improvements. We know what victims and survivors need, and we know that they cannot wait five more years for those improvements. Although it might seem logical to delay the reauthorization process, the longer we delay, the more people experience domestic and sexual violence. In the #MeToo era, we can and we must do better!

What is in H.R.1585?

H.R.1585, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019, is based on extensive outreach to survivors, direct service providers, and other stakeholders. It meets the needs of diverse survivors by:

- Maintaining vital protections for all survivors;
- Investing in prevention;
- Ensuring victim service providers can use VAWA funding to help victims experiencing a range of domestic violence behaviors, not just physical abuse;
- Ending impunity for non-Native perpetrators of sexual assault, child abuse co-occurring with domestic violence, stalking, sex trafficking, and assaults on tribal law enforcement officers on tribal lands;
- Improving access to safe housing and economic independence;
- Protecting dating violence from abusers with firearms;
- Improving the healthcare system’s and workplace responses to the four crimes; and
- Improving enforcement of court-ordered firearm relinquishment.

A slightly more detailed summary is available in the Appendix.

Contacting your Representative

Who is my Representative?

You can find your Representative by going to [house.gov](https://www.house.gov) and typing your zip code into the upper right-hand corner. Depending on where you live, the website might ask you for your address, because your zip code is split between two different Congressional districts. If you click on your Congressperson's name on the left hand side of the page, underneath their picture, it will take you to your Representative's website. Click on the 'contact' link for contact information. You can find their social media handles [here](#).

How can I engage my Representative?

You can engage with your Representative in a number of ways, including via phone, email, social media, at town-hall meetings, or in-person. Please refer to the [full toolkit](#) for more in-depth information about each of these options. Usually, you will be interacting with a staff person rather than the Representative themselves, but the staff will pass the information onto the Congressperson - that is the staff's job! Sample scripts are provided below. Social media posts can be found in the section entitled 'Social Media.'

What am I asking my Representative to do?

It depends on who your Representative is. If your Representative is already a co-sponsor of H.R.1585 (check [here](#) to find out), thank them for their support and urge them to vote 'no' on any harmful amendments and on the motion to recommit. If you think your Representative might be interested in co-sponsoring H.R.1585 but needs a little constituent encouragement, urge them to sign on as a co-sponsor, to vote 'no' on harmful amendments and on the motion to recommit. Or, if you do not think they are likely to be a co-sponsor, just ask them to vote for H.R.1585, to oppose any harmful amendments, and to vote no on the motion to recommit. Harmful amendments include, but are not limited to, amendments designed to roll back vital protections for vulnerable communities.

If they say they support VAWA, is that the same thing as supporting H.R.1585?

NO! In order to avoid having to make a firm commitment to you, sometimes a Congressperson or their staff will tell you that they support VAWA. If they say they support VAWA without specifically saying the support H.R.1585, press them on it - ask them to commit to supporting H.R.1585!

Script for a call or email to your Representative:

My name is [your name], and I am calling from [your location and, if you are affiliated with a domestic violence or sexual assault program, the name of your program]. I urge Representative

[*your Representative's name*] to support the bipartisan H.R.1585, the Violence Against Women Act of 2019. The Violence Against Women Act is one of the pillars of the federal response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. [*Tell your Representative why VAWA has been so important to your community or, if you have a story you feel comfortable sharing, share your experience*]. Every time VAWA has been reauthorized, it has been strengthened based on our increased understanding of gender-based violence. The #MeToo era, when survivors are clamoring for change, is not the time to roll back important protections or even to maintain the status quo. H.R.1585 maintains protections for all victims, makes vital investments in sexual assault prevention, ensures sexual predators who prey on Native women can be held accountable, protects victims of domestic violence from intimate partner homicide, and increases victims' access to safe housing and economic stability. As a constituent, I urge you to co-sponsor and support H.R.1585. As part of your support, I also urge you to oppose any motion to recommit.

Social media

Why use social media?

Social media is a quick and easy way to contact your Representative. Not only is it efficient, everyone else who looks at your Representative's page can also see your message! However, unlike with a call or email, you are unlikely to get a response. You can find your Representative's social media accounts [here](#).

Hashtags

The hashtags for this campaign are #HR1585, #VAWA19, and #VAWA4ALL

Sample Facebook Posts


The Violence Against Women Act has been one of the cornerstones of America's response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking for the past quarter-century. Every time Congress has reauthorized VAWA, they have strengthened it to improve protections and access to safety and justice for all survivors. VAWA has expired, and it is time to renew it with modest but vital improvements. In the Me Too era, we cannot afford to maintain the status quo or, even worse, to roll back hard-fought gains. I call on you to co-sponsor and vote for bipartisan #HR1585, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019, and to reject any motion to recommit. #VAWA19 #VAWA4ALL

Sample Tweets

- The bipartisan VAWA (#HR1585), introduced by @RepKarenBass & @RepBrianFitz, includes key enhancements for all survivors of domestic and sexual violence. @Rephandle can I count on you to help get this bill across the finish line?! #VAWA19 #VAWA4ALL
- The Violence Against Women Act (#HR1585) is a bipartisan bill. @Rephandle can I count on you to co-sponsor this #VAWA4ALL survivors? #VAWA19
- I'm with @RepKarenBass & @RepBrianFitz to pass #VAWA4ALL because communities need access to sexual assault prevention! @RepHandle, please co-sponsor #VAWA19 (#HR1585)
- We're with @RepKarenBass & @RepBrianFitz to pass #VAWA4ALL because survivors need housing protections! @RepHandle, please co-sponsor the 'Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019' (#HR1585)!
- I'm with @RepKarenBass & @RepBrianFitz to pass #VAWA4ALL because native survivors deserve justice! Please co-sponsor @RepHandle #HR1585 #VAWA2019

- **@RepHandle**, violence against women happens in our community, too. Reauthorize #VAWA4ALL and support prevention and education programs that keep us safe! #HR1585
- Violence doesn't discriminate and neither should our laws! Support #VAWA19 and ensure Native survivors of gender-based violence have access to justice on tribal lands! #VAWA4ALL #HR1585
- Violence doesn't discriminate and neither should our laws! Support #VAWA19 and ensure incarcerated survivors of gender-based violence have access to trauma-informed care! #VAWA4ALL #HR1585
- Support #VAWA19 and ensure survivors of domestic abuse access to safe housing! #VAWA4ALL #HR1585
- Homicide reduction initiatives are key if we are going to reduce domestic violence fatalities! Support #HR1585 - #VAWA19 - and help prevent firearm-involved intimate partner homicides #VAWA4ALL

Survivors need real change, not just an extension of current law.



Support H.R. 1585 #VAWA19

National Task Force to End Sexual & Domestic Violence

UPDATE: VAWA INTRODUCTION

A bipartisan version of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), H.R. 1585 has been introduced.

The bill, endorsed by the NTF, includes critical enhancements **critical enhancements** including increased funding for prevention programs, homicide reduction policies, and protections for Native survivors.




What can you do?

Ask your rep to co-sponsor!

VAWA is cosponsored by Congresswoman Karen Bass (D-CA) and Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA). Contact your representatives to ask for their support on this critical bill.

National Task Force to End Sexual & Domestic Violence

Hear the voices of survivors: VAWA needs improvements.



Support H.R. 1585 #VAWA19

National Task Force to End Sexual & Domestic Violence

Using the media: op-eds and letters to the editor

What makes a good op-ed or letter to the editor?

A good op-ed is succinct and makes a point. You have a message to get across to people - focus on that rather than going off on tangents. The New York Times' guide to writing a strong op-ed or letter to the editor can be found here. An op-ed can usually be *up to 750 words*, and a letter to the editor is usually between *200 and 300 words*. Check your newspaper's policies for specific length information and for submission instructions.

Op-ed template

Time to Move Beyond Statistics - [*Your name and, if applicable, title and organization*]

The statistics are staggering. [*Choose statistics from the list provided below*]. Domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. They fill emergency rooms and morgues, keeps employees from being able to work, terrorize children, and interfere with their ability to learn. They drives up health care costs, contribute to crime on our streets, and cause lasting harm to families and communities.

It's time – way past time – to do much more to stop this violence, and to protect our communities. [*Choose one or more improvements from the list below to focus on*]. That means reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act with modest but meaningful improvements that enhance our nation's response to these heinous crimes. That means moving forward - never backwards and never remaining static.

Domestic and dating violence, rape and sexual assault, and stalking are pervasive problems in our society. No community is unaffected. They affect us all - they are all of our business. Recognizing this, Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994 to improve the nation's response to the four crimes. It has been reauthorized three times since then, in 2000, 2005, and 2013; each reauthorization made vital improvements to previous law.

[*OPTIONAL - direct service provider/advocate explain the services your organization provides; individuals explain why you are passionate about VAWA. You can also use the talking points below to explain what VAWA does and how impactful it has been*]

The time is upon us to reauthorize VAWA again, and this reauthorization, too, must be responsive to the needs of victims and survivors. Representatives Karen Bass (D-CA-37) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-01) have introduced H.R.1585, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019. This bill, based on extensive consultation with victim service providers, law enforcement, and other experts, preserves previous gains and improves current law to better meet the needs of victims and survivors of domestic violence. It invests in prevention. It increases access to justice and safety for Native women. It protects victims and

survivors and helps them rebuild their lives.

VAWA's authorization expired in mid-February. Now more than ever, we need Congress to make it a priority to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act with the modest enhancements encapsulated in H.R. 1585 – essential legislation that authorizes funding for victim services, prevention programs and other critically needed community services. Stopping domestic and sexual violence and protecting victims must be a priority in our city, our state and our country. There's no time to waste. I call on Representative [*your Representative's name*] and all of Congress to support H.R. 1585 - your constituents are counting on you to do the right thing!

Letter to the editor template

To the Editor,

[*Your organization*] is urging our community and our elected officials to support the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). VAWA saves lives, supports families, and needs to be reauthorized. A strong, bipartisan VAWA reauthorization bill (H.R. 1585) has been introduced in the House. Around the country, one in five women has been raped in her lifetime, one in three women will experience domestic violence, and more than three women are murdered by their partners every day. In our own community, [*explain how gender-based violence impacts your community*].

It is crucial that we know where our elected officials stand when it comes to preventing gender-based violence and protecting survivors. Every current Member of Congress should also publicly declare their support for the reauthorization of VAWA. It's time to hold Congress accountable for helping to make sure all survivors are safe and free from violence and fear. We call on Representative [*your representative's name*] to support victims and survivors by supporting H.R. 1585.

[*Your name, title, organization*]

Talking points for op-eds and letters to the editor:

- The Violence Against Women Act is one of pillars of the federal response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking (“the four crimes”).
- What VAWA does:
 - VAWA provides grants to transform law enforcement's and the legal system's response to the four crimes by bringing together victim service organizations, law enforcement, community-based organizations, prosecutors, judges, and other stakeholders to develop coordinated community responses;
 - VAWA funds prevention through a number of grants that approach prevention from different angles;

- VAWA funds services to victims of the four crimes, including crisis intervention, domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy, shelter services, legal services and advocacy, housing for survivors, community-based interventions, and other important services;
- VAWA funds population-specific programming, including programs designed to meet the needs of communities of color, older adults, rural communities, people with disabilities, young adults, LGBTQ people, and others; and
- VAWA provides critical legal protections to all survivors.
- VAWA has transformed America's response to the four crimes.
 - Since 1994, when VAWA was first passed, the rate of domestic violence has decreased 63%.
 - VAWA has strengthened victims' involvement in the criminal legal system, including their likelihood of reaching out for help.
 - A study of Kentucky survivors found that when survivors seek protective orders, threats to harm or kill the survivors decreased by nearly 50%, moderate physical abuse decreased by 61%, and severe physical abuse decreased by 50%.
 - Research shows that sexual assault response teams - a form of coordinated community response - improve legal outcomes, the experience of the victim, and multidisciplinary cooperation.
 - VAWA-funded court and law enforcement reforms have improved access to safety and justice for survivors, increased offender accountability, and decreased recidivism.
 - VAWA-funded prevention programming has been empirically demonstrated to reduce sexual violence.
 - Between 2014 and 2016, VAWA funding provided more than one million victim services for survivors of the four crimes, including almost 2 million shelter nights, 600,000 hotline calls, victim advocacy for almost 300,000 unique individuals, and legal services for almost 100,000 survivors. Every six months in that period, VAWA funding served an average of 112,000 primary survivors and their children.
 - VAWA saves money. A 2002 study found that in its first five years, VAWA saved \$15 billion in averted costs.
 - VAWA has ended impunity for domestic abusers who prey on Native women on tribal lands.
 - VAWA protects diverse survivors, including LGBTQ survivors, older adult survivors, survivors with disabilities, immigrant survivors, Native survivors, and others.
- We need to do more

- While the four crimes have decreased significantly since 1994 when VAWA was first passed, rates of violence are still far too high:
 - One in five women and one in 59 men are raped in their lifetimes;
 - One in four women and one in seven men experience severe physical abuse by an intimate partner in their lifetimes;
 - One in six women and one in nineteen men experience stalking in their lifetimes;
 - A woman is murdered by a male intimate partner with a gun every sixteen hours;
 - The four crimes disproportionately impact women and members of underserved communities.
- Maintaining the status quo is not acceptable, nor is rolling back vital protections for all survivors
- H.R.1585 is a bipartisan bill based on extensive outreach to direct service providers, other experts in the field, victims, survivors, and a variety of other stakeholders. It:
 - Maintains vital protections for all survivors;
 - Invests in prevention;
 - Ensures victim service providers can use VAWA funding to help victims experiencing a range of domestic violence behaviors, not just physical abuse;
 - Ends impunity for non-Native perpetrators of sexual assault, child abuse co-occurring with domestic violence, stalking, sex trafficking, and assaults on tribal law enforcement officers on tribal lands;
 - Improves access to safe housing and economic independence;
 - Protects dating violence from abusers with firearms;
 - Improves the healthcare system's and workplace responses to the four crimes; and
 - Improves enforcement of court-ordered firearm relinquishment.



National Task Force to End Sexual & Domestic Violence

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

Key Recommendations from Advocates for Reauthorization

The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence ("NTF") is focused on the development, passage and implementation of effective public policy to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. The full membership of the NTF is comprised of a large and diverse group of national, tribal, state, territorial and local organizations, as well as individuals, committed to securing an end to violence against women.

The NTF is supporting a limited number of key enhancements to the Violence Against Women Act based on our process of broadly surveying thousands for advocates and allied professionals about the needs of survivors and communities. This extensive feedback from the field informed the work of subject matter workgroups that developed specific recommendations to improve VAWA in critical areas. *Any bill that erodes current protections is unacceptable.*

INVEST IN PREVENTION:

- Increase the authorization of the Rape Prevention & Education Program (RPE) to \$150 million (current authorization \$50 million) and specifically include sexual harassment to its authorized use. Demand for programs funded by RPE have skyrocketed with the #MeToo movement and the national focus on campus sexual assault, and a corresponding increase is critically necessary to meet the need of communities.
- Increase funding for VAWA Consolidated Youth grants. Prevention education that engages men and boys as allies and promotes healthy relationships is key to reducing gender-based violence. Increased funding will provide programs with the resources they need to increase the depth and reach of these critical programs.

EXPAND ACCESS:

- Promote safety for victims of violence on tribal lands by: clarifying that tribal courts can hold domestic violence offenders who assault tribal police officers or other justice officials accountable; ensuring non-Indian perpetrators who commit sexual assault, stalking, child abuse, and trafficking on tribal lands are held accountable; creating a

permanent authorization for DOJ's Tribal Access to National Crime Information Program; improving the response to cases of missing and murdered women in tribal communities; and addressing the unique barriers to safety for Alaska Native women.

- Expressly add sexual harassment to the allowable uses of the Workplaces Respond to Domestic and Sexual Violence: A National Resource Center, which provides tools, resources, and training to private employers and federal agencies.
- Promote economic security for survivors and assist with supports for leaving abusers with targeted enhancements to existing law including allowing domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking victims to be eligible for unemployment insurance; protections from discrimination in employment based on one's status as a victim; research into the economic impacts of victimization on college students, and public education related to economic abuse and economic security for victims.
- Train healthcare providers to better recognize and respond to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking across the lifespan, particularly through HRSA programs such as the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program.

REMOVE BARRIERS:

- Ensure compliance with VAWA non-discrimination requirements and guarantee equal access to VAWA protections for all victims regardless of gender, especially those from marginalized communities.
- Enforce housing rights for survivors/victims, create a position at HUD specifically tasked with this work, increase survivors' options to maintain housing or break their leases, and strengthen the emergency transfer protections in federal housing programs to assist survivors needing to flee their homes due to safety concerns.
- Add a new purpose to the Improving Criminal Justice Response grant program to implement alternative justice responses that are focused on victim autonomy, agency and safety to provide resolution and restitution for the victim.
- Strengthen privacy protections across state line, online with digital records, and preserve confidentiality upon survivor's death in accordance with their wishes.
- Remove the use of bench warrants and other body attachments to compel victim cooperation and testimony, as this has been found to be traumatizing for the victim and counterproductive in encouraging victims to cooperate.
- Acknowledge the trauma of incarceration on women and their family members, especially their children, and improve health care services and trauma informed responses to better prepare incarcerated women to return to their communities.
- Improve enforcement of current domestic violence-related firearms laws and equally protect all victims.

DEFINITIONS:

Revise a few definitions to clarify language, match state laws, address new technological concerns, and provide technical corrections. These definitions apply to VAWA grants only and do not amend the criminal code.

- New definitions include: Abuse in Later Life (in lieu of elder abuse); Alternative Justice Response; Digital Services; Forced Marriage; Economic Abuse; and Technological Abuse.
- Amended definitions include:
 - Domestic Violence – the original definition is outdated and does not sync with most state laws; correct unintended 2013 deletion of “Court-based and court-related personnel.”
 - Legal Services (to include vacatur and expungement).

NEW GRANT CONDITIONS:

- Allow grantees to use technology to protect victim privacy.
- Extend advocate confidentiality beyond the death of the victim so victims feel free to communicate fully with their advocates without concern for reputation, civil liability, or possible harm to friends or family.

AMENDED GRANT CONDITIONS:

- Clarify that VAWA confidentiality applies to federal and state agencies seeking information from grantees.
- Urge DOJ’s Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) to make training widely available.
- Permit grantees to serve victims of forced marriage who are also victims of a VAWA crime.
- Increase the cap on expenditures requiring Deputy Attorney General approval to allow DOJ’s Office on Violence Against Women to more easily provide oversight and support for VAWA multi-day training events.

UPDATE: VAWA INTRODUCTION

A **bipartisan** version of the **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), H.R. 1585** has been introduced.

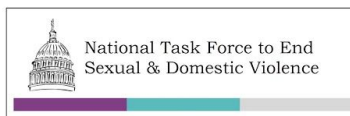
The bill, endorsed by the NTF, includes critical enhancements **critical enhancements** including increased funding for prevention programs, homicide reduction policies, and protections for Native survivors.



What can you do?

Ask your rep to co-sponsor!

VAWA is cosponsored by Congresswoman Karen Bass (D-CA) and Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA). Contact your representatives to ask for their support on this critical bill.



**Hear the voices
of survivors:
VAWA needs
improvements.**



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#VAWA19

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