

Senator Patrick Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Senator Richard Shelby, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Representative Rosa DeLauro, Chair, House Committee on Appropriations
Representative Kay Granger, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations
Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Senator Jerry Moran, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Senator Patty Murray, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Senator Roy Blunt, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Senator Brian Schatz, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Senator Susan Collins, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Senator Chris Murphy, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Senator Shelley Moore Capito, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Representative Matt Cartwright, Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Representative Robert Aderholt, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Representative Tom Cole, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Representative David E. Price, Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Representative Mario Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard, Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Representative Chuck Fleischmann, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

December 2, 2021

Dear Senators and Representatives:

The undersigned national organizations working to end domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking and representing local, state, and tribal organizations serving survivors, urge you to move as quickly as possible to pass a final FY2022 appropriations bill. The House and Senate have introduced measures that significantly increase funding for federal programs that address domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, which are critically needed. Domestic and sexual violence are life-threatening, pervasive crimes that affect millions of people every day. **We thank you for your past support and implore you to build upon our nation's progress in addressing these crimes by providing greatly-needed investments in a final FY2022 funding bill.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted survivors of domestic violence, dating violence and sexual assault and exacerbated their needs. Survivors are at risk in a time of heightened economic, health, familial, and emotional trauma. As many survivors struggle with severe trauma reactions due to the increased stress of the pandemic, domestic violence providers, rape crisis centers and culturally specific programs are struggling to meet those needs just as they are committed to finding innovative solutions to better reach survivors remotely as a result of COVID. Our message to survivors must be clear: when you come forward for help and support, it will be available online or in person.

Our nation has made such phenomenal progress in understanding and addressing violence against women because we have made a national, ongoing, annual investment. First authorized in 1984, the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) is our nation's only dedicated funding source for domestic violence prevention programs and provides essential funding for advocacy, safe shelter, supportive services and other related programs. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), passed in 1994, fostered unprecedented coordination between frontline stakeholders who respond to domestic violence and sexual assault crises. VAWA also funds specialized services such as sexual assault services, culturally specific services, legal services, and housing, and invests in prevention and other system changes. VAWA's work is complemented by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), which funds direct services to victims of all types of crime, including domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. In the last several years, appropriators have created and maintained a domestic violence and sexual assault set aside in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Continuum of Care program. Together, these funding streams help to ensure victims have access to safety, healing and justice but gaps remain.

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) Domestic Violence Counts report found that in just one day in 2020 over 11,000 requests for services went unmet due to lack of funding and resources. According to a 2020 survey by the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, 62% of the nation's rape crisis centers have a waiting list for counseling services, 35% lack a therapist on staff, and more than half have seen an increased demand for services in the past year. Additionally, Native women face some of the highest levels of violence of any group. Four in five American Indian and Alaska Native women have experienced violence in their lifetime and overall, which comes to more than 1.5 million American Indian and Alaska Native women. Over 90 percent of these victims have experienced that violence at the hands of a non-Indian intimate partner.

Additionally, the Department of Homeland Security FY2022 bills include increased funding for personnel to address the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services U visas processing backlog and other key provisions. Without this increased funding, over 276,000 survivors who are U visa applicants will continue to be endangered waiting for work authorization.

For those individuals who are not able to find safety, the consequences can be dire, including homelessness, continued exposure to life-threatening violence, or even death. Victims of these degrading and life-threatening crimes rely on federally funded direct services such as shelter, rape crisis services, legal assistance, counseling, and more. Federal funding underpins our nation's improvements to the community-based response to domestic and sexual violence.

Thank you for your consideration and past support. The investments in the FY2022 appropriations bills reflect survivors' urgent and increased needs. **We ask Congress to continue investing in these vital programs and to finalize the FY2022**

appropriations process as soon as possible and maintain the significant increases proposed in the House and Senate funding bills.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Monica McLaughlin, National Network to End Domestic Violence at mmclaughlin@nedv.org or Terri Poore, National Alliance to End Sexual Violence at terri@endsexualviolence.org.

Sincerely,

Alaska Native Women's Resource Center
Alliance of Tribal Coalitions to End Violence
Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence
Esperanza United (Formerly Casa de Esperanza National Latin@ Network)
Futures Without Violence
Jewish Women International (JWI)
Legal Momentum, the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Congress of American Indians
National Council of Jewish Women
National Domestic Violence Hotline
National Indigenous Women's Resource Center
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Organization for Women
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
Stronghearts Native Helpline
Tahirih Justice Center

CC: Members of the U.S. Senate
Members of the U.S. House of Representatives
White House Gender Policy Council