



**NNEDV**  
NATIONAL NETWORK  
TO END DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE

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March 8, 2021

The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Jackson Lee, Fitzpatrick, and Nadler:

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) commends your leadership in introducing the bipartisan Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021, H.R. 1620. Representing the 56 state and territorial coalitions against domestic and sexual violence, NNEDV works to make domestic violence a national priority; change the way communities respond to domestic violence; and strengthen efforts to prevent intimate partner violence. We welcome your bill, which builds on H.R. 1585, passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Our nation is in the midst of multiple, intersecting crises that exacerbate disparities and endanger survivors of domestic violence. To make real strides in reducing gender-based violence during this challenging time, we must invest in strategies that advance access to safety, justice, and economic stability for survivors while working to reduce reliance on and reform the systems that are not helping all survivors. Policies and related resources must respond to the specific needs of historically marginalized survivors, especially survivors of color.

Your bill takes a holistic approach, addressing the complex realities of survivors' lives. It maintains established protections, while also addressing persistent gaps. In particular, NNEDV supports:

- funding, including a new \$40 million authorization for the Culturally Specific Services Program;
- avenues to justice that focus on victim autonomy, agency, and safety, including restorative justice practices, investments in responses beyond a criminal system approach, and expanded access to VAWA-funded legal services for survivors;
- housing protections that allow survivors in federally-assisted housing to relocate to new, safe housing with victim relocation vouchers; maintain housing after a perpetrator leaves; or terminate a lease early;
- restoration of tribal jurisdiction that allows tribes to hold non-native perpetrators of sexual assault, stalking, child abuse, elder abuse, assault against law enforcement officers, and trafficking accountable when they commit crimes on native lands;

- investment in prevention via the Rape Prevention and Education Program and VAWA Department of Justice prevention programs;
- closure of dangerous legal loopholes in existing federal domestic violence-related firearms laws that will help reduce domestic violence and dating violence homicides;
- economic justice responses that help survivors access unemployment insurance and help to clarify what constitutes economic abuse; and
- VAWA non-discrimination requirements to guarantee equal access to VAWA protections for all survivors regardless of gender.

The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 will ensure survivors can heal and be safe. We commend your leadership in the bill's introduction and are grateful that you have centered the needs of all survivors. We look forward to working with the House and Senate in securing the best law possible, especially considering the needs of the most historically marginalized survivors. In particular, we remain concerned that immigrant survivors continue to face abuse and must be able to access VAWA protections and obtain desperately needed U Visas. The final bill must address these concerns.

We stand ready to be a resource to you as you work towards the bill's swift passage. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or Monica McLaughlin, NNEDV's Director of Public Policy, at [advocacy@nnev.org](mailto:advocacy@nnev.org) or 202-540-9985 if we can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah J. Vagins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deborah J. Vagins  
NNEDV President and CEO