



National Task Force  
to End Sexual and  
Domestic Violence Against Women

September 23, 2024

Dear Representative, ,

As the Steering Committee of the National Taskforce to End Sexual and Domestic Violence (“NTF”), comprising national leadership organizations advocating on behalf of sexual and domestic violence victims and women’s rights, we represent hundreds of organizations and thousands of advocates across the country dedicated to ensuring **all** survivors of violence receive the protections they deserve. For this reason, we write to express our opposition to **HR 5717**, the “No Bailout for Sanctuary Cities Act,” which would penalize communities with “sanctuary,” or community trust policies by reducing funding to such communities. Such legislation would harm all victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and trafficking, and in particular, immigrant victims.

***Stripping Communities of Federal Funds will Harm All Survivors***

HR 5717 would strip federal funding, including funds for food, shelter, healthcare services, legal services, and transportation assistance used for non-citizens who are present in the United States without lawful status in communities with “sanctuary” policies. In doing so, this bill will serve to undermine critical programs that serve victims. For example, jurisdictions across the county that receive Violence Against Women Act or other federal grants that support access to sexual assault forensic exams and nurse examiners, or HHS health related grants that support care for victims could risk loss of funding. Funding under the Victims of Crime Act or the Violence Against Women Act that support domestic violence legal services could potentially be impacted. HHS Family Violence Prevention and Services Act funding for domestic violence shelter services could be impacted. Federal HUD Community Development Block Grant, McKinney Vento homelessness funds, and other critical programs that provide access to housing for domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking victims could be impacted. Potentially, DOJ Byrne/ JAG funding for law enforcement could also be impacted.

These federal programs support victims to escape, overcome, and heal from abuse and violence in communities all across the United States, and these critical community health, housing, legal and social services are accessed by **all** victims in “sanctuary” jurisdictions, U.S. Citizens and immigrants alike.

***HR 5717’s Provisions Contradict the Programs and Protections for Immigrant Victims Provided in Federal Law, including the Violence Against Women Act and Trafficking Victims Protection, and Will Harm Victims of Trafficking, Sexual Assault, and Domestic Violence.***

In addition to harming victims across the board in jurisdictions with community trust policies, HR 5717 undermines federal laws that protect immigrant survivors of violence. During this month, September 2024, we celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). As recognized

in VAWA of 1994, abusers and traffickers use their victims' fear of deportation as a tool to silence and trap them. VAWA responded to these abusive tactics with the creation of the immigration "[Self-Petition](#)" provisions. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act provides protections for victims of [human trafficking and other violent crimes](#), as well as, supporting them in coming out of the shadows to access services and legal response. Not only does HR 5717 ignore the intent of federal law that provides immigration protections for victims who may not yet have status, it serves to aid harm-doers who leverage the immigration system to coerce and further isolate their victims by cutting funding for healthcare, human services, legal assistance, housing, transportation, and other resources. Not only are the individual victims harmed, but their children, and the community at large is harmed when immigrant victims remain isolated and fearful of accessing services and protection from violent perpetrators.

For these reasons, we urge you to affirm the intent and spirit of VAWA and oppose **HR 5717**. Thank you very much for taking this important step to protect and support immigrant survivors of domestic violence, trafficking, and sexual assault.

For more information, please contact Grace Huang, Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence at [ghuang@api-gbv.org](mailto:ghuang@api-gbv.org), [\(206\) 420-7369](tel:(206)420-7369).

Sincerely,

***The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence***