

Violence Against Women Fact Sheet

BACKGROUND

Violence against women affects the lives of countless women and their families across the United States and does not discriminate based on socioeconomic, class, age and racial and ethnic backgrounds. Day after day women of all ages, income levels and race-ethnicities are victims of violent acts including rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. And many more women are living their lives as survivors of violence. With the creation of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994, large gains have been made in addressing violence against women. However, much of the attention over the past 10 years has been focused on ending violence against women, and less attention has been given to violence affecting young women and girls. Each year in the United States, young women and girls are at risk of various forms of violence including child abuse and neglect, stalking, sexual assault and rape, dating violence, and domestic violence.¹

To that end, the YWCA advocates for policies that will prevent and help eliminate violence against women and girls. The YWCA supports anti-violence policies that protect victims, hold perpetrators accountable, and work to eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls including sexual assault, rape, domestic violence, trafficking of women, and dating violence.

LEGISLATION

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

In 1994, Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) as part of the Violence Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, commonly referred to as the 1994 Crime Bill. Co-sponsored by Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE), the Violence Against Women Act sought to establish a comprehensive approach to addressing and ending violence against women. VAWA was reauthorized in 2005 with some important new programs including provisions focusing on violence against young women and girls, sexual assault, and the housing and economic needs of survivors of violence.

With the reauthorization of this important bill it is now necessary to insure full implementation and funding of the 2005 Violence Against Women Act. Some of the vital programs provided by VAWA include:

- Sexual Assault Services Program, which would be the first federal funding stream dedicated to direct services for victims of sexual assault.
- Protections for domestic violence victims to keep women from being evicted from public housing and from losing housing subsidies as a result of the criminal acts of their abusers.
- Improved protections for battered and trafficked immigrants.
- Strengthened Confidentiality Enforcement protects personal information of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. Currently, domestic violence shelters and transitional housing programs are being forced to share detailed information about their clients, placing victims in danger.

YWCA POSITION

The YWCA supports public policies that protect victims, hold perpetrators accountable, and work to eradicate sexual assault and domestic violence, trafficking of women, and dating violence. The YWCA recognizes the need for anti-violence programs and policies to be culturally sensitive in both their approaches to combating violence against women and in responding to victims of violence.

Specifically, we support the continuance and full funding for the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). The YWCA also supports legislation that ensures employment stability and economic security for victims of violence against women.

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FACTS

- **Young women between the ages of 16-24 are the most vulnerable to domestic violence, experiencing the highest per capita rates of non-fatal intimate partner violence.** ⁱⁱ
- **Black women between the ages of 20-24 experience domestic violence at a higher rate than their White counterparts.** For this age group, there were 29 acts of domestic violence per 1,000 Black women and 20 per 1,000 White women. ⁱⁱⁱ Both Black and White women experience domestic violence at similar rates for every other age group.
- **Latina women experience violence.** Approximately 7.9% of Latinas will be raped, 21.2% will be physically assaulted, and 4.8% will be stalked by a spouse, boyfriend or ex-boyfriend during their lifetime. ^{iv}
- **Young women with lower annual household incomes experience domestic violence at significantly higher rates than women with higher annual household incomes.** Females ages 16 to 19 with a household income of \$7,500 or less, were twice as likely to experience domestic violence than those females in the same age category with higher household incomes. ^v
- **In a survey by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, 56% of cities surveyed cited domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness.** ^{vi} Barriers to locating safe and affordable housing for domestic violence victims and their children include a lack of available low-income housing in the United States, and often as a result of the perpetrators actions poor landlord references, poor credit history and a lack of financial resources.
- **According to the Department of Justice, young women ages 12 to 24 are at the greatest risk for experiencing a rape or sexual assault.** ^{vii} **More than half of all rapes of women occur before age 18; 22% occur before age 12.** ^{viii}
- **Women of all races and ethnicities experience rape.** 34.1% Native American and Alaskan Native women, and 24.4% of mixed race women, 18.8% of Black women, 17.7% of White women, 6.8% Asian-Pacific Islander women reported that they had experienced a completed or attempted rape at some point in their lifetime. ^{ix}

TALKING POINTS ON LEGISLATION

- **The reauthorize Violence Against Women Act continues and creates a variety of programs designed to educate and protect women and children from violence yet these programs can only be effective if they are fully funded and implemented.** Because VAWA passed at the end of the year, funding for the new programs was not able to be included in the President's request therefore it is up to Congress to ensure that the VAWA programs receive full funding in the 2007 federal budget.
- **Women experience violence throughout their lives including during childhood, youth, and young adulthood.** VAWA III (S. 1197/H.R. 3402) includes funding to address violence against young women and girls; it is imperative that these funds are provided in full in the 2007 budget.
- **Young women ages 24 and younger experience many forms of violence including dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, witness family violence and child abuse.** VAWA III (S. 1197/H.R. 3402) addresses the needs of children and youth by creating programs to educate youth and people who work with youth on issues of violence, and for youth victims and perpetrators of violence. It is important that these programs are fully funded in the 2007 federal budget.

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- **Women and young women of color experience unique challenges in reporting violence and receiving services.**
- **Every two minutes a woman is raped and every three minutes an attempted rape is committed.^x**
- **Access to safe and affordable housing is critical to the short-term safety planning and long-term economic needs of violence victims and their families.** VAWA III (S. 1197/H.R. 3402 will provide safety protections to victims living in shelters and transitional housing facilities by requiring the confidentiality of their personally identifying information such as first and last name, social security number, address, and telephone number.

RESOURCES

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence: <http://www.ncadv.org/>

National Women's Alliance: <http://www.nwaforchange.org/>

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN): <http://www.rainn.org>

U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawo/>

United States Senate: <http://www.senate.gov/>

United States House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov/>

Legislative Information on the Internet: <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

¹ Fisher, Bonnie S., Francis T. Cullen & Michael G. Turner. (2000). *The Sexual Victimization of College Women*. See <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/182369.pdf>

¹¹ Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, (October 2001) "Intimate Partner Violence and Age of Victim, 1993-1999." <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ipva99.pdf>

¹² Bureau of Justice Statistics. (October 2001) *Intimate Partner Violence and Age of Victim, 1993-1999*. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ipva99.pdf>

¹⁴ Tjaden, Patricia and Nancy Thoennes. (July 2000) *Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. U.S. Department of Justice. <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/181867.pdf>

¹⁵ Bureau of Justice Statistics. (October 2001) *Intimate Partner Violence and Age of Victim, 1993-1999*. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ipva99.pdf>

¹⁶ The United States Conference of Mayors. (1999) *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities*. <http://www.usmayors.org/uscm/homeless/hunger99.pdf>

¹⁷ Bureau of Justice Statistics. (October 2001) *Intimate Partner Violence and Age of Victim, 1993-1999*. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ipva99.pdf>

¹⁸ Tjaden, Patricia and Nancy Thoennes. (July 2000) *Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. U.S. Department of Justice. <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/181867.pdf>

¹⁹ Tjaden, Patricia and Nancy Thoennes. (November 2000) *Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/183781.pdf>

²⁰ Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network. <http://www.rainn.org/statistics.html>