

## THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (VAWA)

### BACKGROUND

- Gender-based violence (domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence) occurs across all races, ages, classes, and ethnic backgrounds, but at disparate rates and with **disproportionate impacts for women of color and other marginalized communities**.
  - **One in three women will experience domestic violence**, and more than three women are murdered by their partners each day.<sup>i</sup>
  - **One in five women has been raped** in their lifetime.<sup>ii</sup>
  - One in six (**19.3 million**) **women have been stalked by an intimate partner** during their lifetime to the point that they felt very fearful or believed that they would be harmed or killed.<sup>iii</sup>
  - Fifty-four percent of multi-racial women, 46 percent of American Indian / Alaska Native women, 43 percent of Black women, 37 percent of Latinas, 36 percent of White women, and 20 percent of Asian or Pacific Islander women have been the victim of intimate partner violence<sup>iv</sup>.
- Between 21 and 60 percent of **survivors of intimate partner violence lose their jobs** for reasons related to their abuse.<sup>v</sup>
- Approximately **50 percent of women who are homeless report that intimate partner violence was the immediate cause** of their homelessness, and over 92 percent of homeless mothers have experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse during their lifetime.<sup>vi</sup>
- **Negative physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health issues** have been linked to gender-based violence. Survivors are also at a higher risk for developing addictions to tobacco, alcohol, or drugs.<sup>vii</sup>

### WHAT VAWA DOES

- Establishes grants to create and improve law enforcement and prosecution strategies at the state and local levels.
- Provides a framework for collaboration between federal, state, and local governments, direct service providers, law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, and the courts.
- Provides funding to support criminal and civil legal assistance; crisis support and intervention; hotline calls; counseling; victim-witness notification; shelter, transitional housing, and direct assistance for housing-related costs; childcare; transportation; victim confidentiality; accompaniment and advocacy through medical and social service processes; and more.

## PLEASE SUPPORT REAUTHORIZATION OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) has been instrumental in preventing and responding to gender-based violence. Since its initial authorization in 1994, and as a result of improvements established during the 2000, 2005, and 2013 reauthorization processes, VAWA has:

- Directly addressed childcare, affordable housing, community support, transportation, and other barriers that survivors of gender-based violence face in accessing safety and resources.
- Ensured that survivors of gender-based violence from underserved communities have gained access to the same lifesaving and life-changing assistance and resources as other survivors.
- Significantly improved criminal justice and civil court responses to gender-based violence, which has led to an increase in reporting and criminal justice involvement by survivors and an increase in survivors seeking protective orders.
- Greatly strengthened federal-state partnerships to most effectively and efficiently combat gender-based violence, including provision of training and technical assistance, while giving states and jurisdictions the flexibility to respond to their own unique needs.

## Please support survivors of gender-based violence by supporting the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

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<sup>i</sup> Black, M.C. et al (2011). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved 24 January 2017 from [https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs\\_report2010-a.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf). [hereinafter NISVS:2010]

<sup>ii</sup> Id.

<sup>iii</sup> Id.

<sup>iv</sup> Id.

<sup>v</sup> Emily F. Rothman et al. How employment helps female victims of intimate partner violence: A qualitative study. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*. (2007). 12(2). Retrieved 16 January 2017 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.12.2.136>.

<sup>vi</sup> Pressing Issues Facing Families Who Are Homeless. (2013). American Institutes for Research. Retrieved 16 January 2017 from <http://online.fliphtml5.com/xsgw/iqjt/>.

<sup>vii</sup> Global and Regional Estimate of Violence Against Women: Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Non-Partner Sexual Violence (2013). World Health Organization. Retrieved 16 January 2017 from [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/9789241564625\\_eng.pdf?ua=1](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/9789241564625_eng.pdf?ua=1).