

## WEEK WITHOUT VIOLENCE ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

Week Without Violence is an ideal time to advocate for ending gender-based violence in your community and across the country. Below, you will find four levels of advocacy action to help you (1) learn more about gender-based violence; (2) urge your Members of Congress to support VAWA and FVPSA; (3) educate your community, candidates, and elected officials about gender-based violence; and (4) encourage your local and state elected officials to pledge their support for survivors of gender-based violence.

### Action #1: Learn About Gender-Based Violence

We believe that everyone deserves to be safe and free from violence, abuse, and threats. However, violence against women continues to impact the lives of countless women and their families across the United States. Women and girls of all ages, income levels, racial and ethnic communities, sexual orientations, gender identities, and religious affiliations experience violence in the form of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, and trafficking.

Even if your organization does not have programming specifically designed to support survivors, you likely come into contact with survivors of gender-based violence:

- 1 in 5 women has been raped in her lifetime; every two minutes another American is sexually assaulted
- 1 in 3 young girls is a victim of physical, verbal, or emotional abuse in the United States
- 1 in 3 women will experience domestic violence within her lifetime – and more than 3 women are murdered by their partners each day
- Intimate partner violence is the immediate cause of homelessness for almost half of homeless women, and over 90% of homeless mothers have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse during their lifetimes.

Make sure you – and your organization – know about the issues and where survivors can receive help:

- Week Without Violence Fact Sheets (these are located in the digital toolkit you gain access to once you [register](#) an event) – learn more about gender-based violence
- [The National Domestic Violence Hotline](#): 800.799.SAFE (7233) – provides a phone and chat line for survivors of domestic violence
- [The National Sexual Assault Telephone Hotline](#) (RAINN): 800.656.HOPE (4673) – provides a toll-free line for survivors of sexual assault

## Action #2: Urge Congress to End Violence Against Women and Girls!

YWCA is on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, stand up for social justice, help families, and strengthen communities. That's why for more than 20 years, we have set aside the third week in October as a Week Without Violence. Week Without Violence is part of a global movement to end violence against women and girls with the World YWCA. We believe that everyone deserves to be safe and free from violence. Unfortunately, survivors of violence are not given equal access to resources and support. In fact, some violence is ignored altogether. So, as we work to end gender-based violence, we must also address the unique challenges women and girls may face.

[Act Now!](#) Urge your Member of Congress to support reauthorization of VAWA, FVPSA, and other policies that will help women and girls be safe and free from violence in your communities.

## Action #3: Non-Partisan Issue Education for Voters, Candidates, and Elected Officials

When voters go to the polls this year, they will cast their ballots for elected officials who will determine public policy on major issues that impact the lives of women, girls, and people of color. Together, we can make a difference by ensuring our communities and our voices are heard!

Here are some steps you can take to ensure that women and girls will be safe from violence in your community:

- Engage your community, candidates for office, and elected officials on social media. Use our [Social Media Guide](#) for tips, sample tweets, and Facebook status updates to:
  - Raise awareness about gender-based violence in your community and the needs of survivors
  - Ask your candidates and elected officials where they stand and what they will do to support survivors
  - Make sure to engage with candidates on both sides of the aisle
- Send a letter to the editor to your local news outlet
  - If there has been a recent incident of gender-based violence in your community, use [Sample A](#), otherwise, use [Sample B](#).

## Action #4: Pledge for Local and State Officials to Support Survivors of Gender-Based Violence

Together we can end gender-based violence, but it will take a commitment from us all. Use the action below to engage your state and local elected officials in the movement. With their help we can ensure that the unique challenges women and girls of color face are put in the forefront of policy efforts and that all survivors have the resources and support they need to thrive. With this pledge we can hold leaders accountable to work with us to end gender-based violence. Urge your state and local elected officials to pledge their support TODAY. Consider simply emailing this pledge to your elected officials, or print to use as a call to action after meeting with them. Once they sign on, make their commitment public and hold them accountable to following through.

Steps you can take to ensure that women and girls will be safe from violence in your community:

- Download the [pledge](#).
- Email the pledge to a state or local official (e.g. mayor, member of council, sheriff, state senator, state representative, etc.) or print it out to use as a call to action after an in-person meeting.
- Once the official signs on, make their commitment public and hold them accountable to following through.

Dear [Elected Official]:

Women and girls of all ages, income levels, racial and ethnic communities, sexual orientations, gender identities, and religious affiliations experience gender-based violence in the form of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, trafficking, and stalking.

Gender-based violence continues to be a pervasive problem in the United States, with far-reaching consequences:

- 1 in 3 women experiences some form of gender-based violence.
- Out of every 1000 cases of rape, 57 lead to an arrest, 11 are referred to prosecutors, and only 7 lead to a felony conviction.
- 1 in 3 girls is a victim of physical, verbal, or emotional abuse in the United States.
- 1 in 4 women will experience domestic violence and, on average, more than 3 women are murdered by their partners in the United States every day.
- Victims of domestic violence lose about 8 million days of paid work per year because of the violence that they experienced.

YWCA is the largest network of gender-based violence service providers in the country. We know the women and girls impacted by this violence. Survivors have shared their stories and experiences with us, helping us to develop strategies to address the multiple challenges that they face.

As we participate in Week Without Violence, we ask that you show your commitment to supporting and protecting survivors of gender-based violence by taking the pledge below.

## PLEDGE

I \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that gender-based violence impacts the lives of countless women and their families that are within my constituency. I acknowledge that survivors of gender-based violence are an expansive and diverse group. Their lives and safety are important to me, even if their lives are different from my own.

To show my commitment to end gender-based violence, this term, I pledge to:

- Consider how any and all policies may affect survivors and victims of gender-based violence in my community.
- Make every diligent effort to ensure that survivors who are marginalized due to racial inequity, immigration status, disability, homelessness, health care issues, or other concerns have resources available to them in my community.
- Dedicate time to raise my awareness and the awareness of others about gender-based violence.
- Visit a non-profit organization in my jurisdiction that serves survivors of gender-based violence.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_