



May 14, 2012

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VOTE NO on H.R. 4970

It Rolls Back Current VAWA Law and Fails to Protect All Victims of Domestic Violence

Dear Representative:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 210 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, we urge you to oppose H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, because it backtracks on legal protections in current law and fails to protect all victims of domestic violence. The Leadership Conference strongly believes that protecting all who suffer domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking is a fundamental civil right, and therefore we intend to score this vote in our Congressional Voting Record for the 112th Congress.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which was adopted in the Senate (S.1925) with strong bipartisan support, addresses gaps in current service programs that left lesbian, gay, transgendered, immigrant and Native women and men without vital services or protections. The need to address these gaps has been recognized by law enforcement officers, victim service providers, and health care professionals. While government reports document that the annual incidence of domestic violence has decreased by 53 percent, it is still unacceptable that in the United States 24 people become victims of rape, physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States every minute.

Yet H.R. 4970 rolls back current law and eliminates important provisions in S. 1925, thereby denying services to many victims of domestic violence. For example, H.R. 4970 rolls back current law on confidentiality, making it more risky for immigrant victims to seek help from the police and thus imperiling their safety and survival. Despite the well-documented unacceptably high rates of domestic violence on tribal lands, H.R. 4970 eliminates provisions that would make it easier for Native women to obtain orders of protection from their abusers. In addition, H.R. 4970 drops all the provisions that would ensure access to services for LGBT survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence.

The Leadership Conference believes that every battered person deserves protection, regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation or immigrant status of the abused. Therefore, we urge you to vote against H.R. 4970 and to ask House leaders to bring the bipartisan Senate-passed VAWA Reauthorization (S. 1925) to the floor. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact June Zeitlin at 202-263-2852 or zeitlin@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,

Wade Henderson
President & CEO

Nancy Zirkin
Executive Vice President