



May 14, 2012

Dear Representative:

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), the oldest and largest national anti-domestic violence advocacy organization that serves more than 1.3 million domestic violence victims in more than 2,000 shelter programs nationwide, remains strongly opposed to H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 introduced by Rep. Sandy Adams.

Despite its favorable passage by the Judiciary Committee last week, H.R. 4970 continues to be an anti-victim bill that promotes a racist, elitist and homophobic agenda. H.R. 4970 weakens vital improvements contained in the recently passed Senate VAWA bill (S. 1925), including provisions designed to increase the safety of Native women and the needs of the LGBT community. In addition, H.R. 4970 includes damaging provisions that roll back years of progress to protect the safety of immigrant victims. Consequently, H.R. 4970 will create obstacles for immigrant victims seeking to report crimes, increase danger for immigrant victims by eliminating important confidentiality protections, and undermine effective anti-fraud protections. While there are portions of H.R. 4970 that mirror the bipartisan Senate bill and are supported by the field, we remain opposed to the bill.

As advocates, we know “a house divided against itself cannot stand.” Our common enemy should not be each other but perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence. The House has the opportunity to pass a victim-centered VAWA reauthorization bill endorsed by women’s advocacy groups that allocates sufficient resources to hold perpetrators accountable and expands services and protections to all victims--regardless of race, nationality, religion, immigrant status or sexual orientation. If partisanship continues to fuel the “war on women” by further assaulting victims of domestic and sexual violence and their children, then abusers win. The consequences of that outcome far exceed a divided House of Representatives.

We strongly oppose H.R. 4970 and urge all members of the House to oppose final passage when it is considered on Wednesday, May 16th. We support a bill that is closer to H.R. 4271 with improvements, including those provisions in the bipartisan Senate bill that protects Tribal victims, immigrant victims, LGBTQ victims and other marginalized communities. Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me or Tralonne Shorter, Public Policy Advisor for NCADV at (202) 744-8455 if you have any questions or want additional information.

Sincerely,


Rita Smith
Executive Director

cc: House Judiciary Committee Members