



May 3, 2012

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
2138 Rayburn
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Conyers
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
B-351 Rayburn
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Conyers:

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) is a national coalition of more than 40 programs in 23 states that works to prevent, respond to, and end all forms of violence against and within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) and HIV-affected communities. NCAVP members work daily with LGBTQ survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence and are uniquely situated to see the challenges that LGBTQ survivors face. NCAVP believes that the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is critically important to LGBTQ survivors because of its power to ensure that LGBTQ survivors have access to services to address this violence. **NCAVP strongly opposes H.R. 4970**, a bill to reauthorize VAWA.

H.R. 4970 is an anti-victim bill that weakens vital improvements contained in the recently passed Senate VAWA bill (S. 1925), including provisions designed to increase the safety of LGBTQ survivors, as well as Native communities and immigrant victims. H.R. 4970 has stripped all protections for LGBTQ survivors and plays politics with the safety of LGBTQ survivors who desperately need improved access to services. While there are portions of H.R. 4970 that mirror the bipartisan Senate bill and are supported by the field, the bill excludes victims and, as such, we remain opposed to the bill.

Thousands of service providers, law enforcement, court personnel, and victims were consulted over a two year nationwide assessment and those efforts consistently revealed the dire need for more training and targeted services to effectively address the needs of LGBTQ victims, immigrant victims and Native women. The expertise of the field was included in S. 1925 and must be included in any bill that addresses Violence Against Women in the House of Representatives.

VAWA must protect **all** survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence.

We strongly oppose H.R. 4970 and urge all members of the Judiciary Committee to oppose it. We support a bill that is closer to H.R. 4271 with improvements, including those provisions in the bipartisan Senate bill that protects LGBTQ victims, tribal victims, immigrant victims, and other marginalized communities. Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or want additional information.

Sincerely,



Sharon Stapel
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NCAVP Representative
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cc: House Judiciary Committee Members