



May 15, 2012

Rep. John A. Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Longworth House Office Building, Room 1011
Independence and New Jersey Avenues, SE
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Cannon House Office Building, Room: 235
1st and Independence Ave., S.E.
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Update – Manager’s amendments to VAWA (H.R. 4970) do not fix critical problems. H.R. 4970 eliminates protections for LGBTQ survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence; harms victims.

Dear Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi:

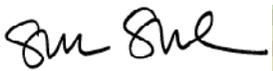
The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) is a national coalition of more than 40 programs in 23 states that works to prevent, respond to, and end all forms of violence against and within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) and HIV-affected communities. NCAVP members work 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. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is critically important to LGBTQ survivors because of its power to ensure that all survivors have access to services to address this violence. H.R. 4970 was introduced without any provisions for the safety of LGBTQ survivors of violence. Further, all LGBTQ-related amendments offered during the Judiciary Committee hearing were rejected on a partisan vote of the Committee. Additionally, no Managers amendment items addressed the safety of LGBTQ survivors. **NCAVP remains strongly opposes to H.R. 4970, a bill to reauthorize VAWA, and the Manager’s amendment do not fix the exclusion of LGBTQ survivors.**

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 of the protections for LGBTQ survivors and plays politics with the safety of LGBTQ survivors lives. While there are portions of Amended H.R. 4970 that mirror the bipartisan Senate bill and are supported by the field, the bill harms 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 S. 1925, a Senate bill with bipartisan support, 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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New York City Anti-Violence Project
NCAVP Representative
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