



The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), enacted in 1994, recognizes the insidious and pervasive nature of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and supports *comprehensive, effective and cost saving* responses to these crimes. VAWA programs, administered by the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services, give law enforcement, prosecutors and judges the tools they need to hold offenders accountable and keep communities safe while supporting victims. VAWA must be swiftly reauthorized to ensure the continuation of these vital, lifesaving programs and laws.

VAWA SAVES LIVES AND SAVES MONEY

VAWA-funded programs have unquestionably improved the national response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. More victims are coming forward and receiving lifesaving services to help them move from crisis to stability, and the criminal justice system has improved its ability to keep victims safe and hold perpetrators accountable. Since VAWA was first passed in 1994:

- Reporting of domestic violence has increased as much as 51%.¹
- All states have passed laws making stalking a crime and have strengthened rape laws.
- The number of individuals killed by an intimate partner has decreased by 34% for women and 57% for men.²
- After using VAWA funding to institute a Lethality Assessment Program, Maryland's intimate partner homicides have been reduced by a remarkable 41% over four years (July 2007-July 2010).³
- A 2010 study demonstrated that an increase in the number of legal services available is associated with a decrease in intimate partner homicide.⁴
- A 2009 Department of Justice Study found Kentucky saved \$85 million in one alone year through the issuance of protection orders and the reduction in violence they caused.⁵
- VAWA saved \$12.6 billion in its first 6 years alone.⁶

VAWA REAUTHORIZATION

While VAWA programs have greatly enhanced systemic changes to meet the needs of victims and have saved countless lives, more work still needs to be done. VAWA's reauthorization will build upon its successes and continue progress towards breaking the cycle and culture of violence by:

- Streamlining programs and increasing accountability;
- Supporting coordinated, community-based responses and direct services for victims;
- Enhancing criminal justice responses to the crime of sexual assault;
- Strengthening housing protections for victims;
- Providing services and prevention programs for young people including those on college campuses;
- Giving law enforcement tools to hold offenders accountable in cases where the victim is from another country; and
- Improving the response to violence against Indian women and other underserved communities.

We urge Congress to swiftly reauthorize VAWA to ensure a continued federal response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

¹"Intimate Partner Violence in the U.S." U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Jan. 2008.; Cassandra Archer et al., Institute for Law and Justice, National Evaluation of the Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies Program 14 (Nov. 2002).

²Uniform Crime report (UCR) Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR), Federal Bureau of Investigation. (Decrease is based on date collected between 1993 and 2007.)

³Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence website. <https://www.mnadv.org/lethality.html>

⁴Reckdenwald, A., & Parker, K.K. (2010). Understanding gender-specific intimate partner homicide: A theoretical and domestic service-oriented approach. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38, 951-958.

⁵*The Kentucky Civil Protective Order Study: A Rural and Urban Multiple Perspective Study of Protective Order Violation Consequences, Responses, & Costs.* (2009). U.S. Department of Justice.

⁶*Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States.* (2003). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centers for Injury Prevention and Control. Atlanta, GA.