

Victim Advocates Celebrate Signing of VAWA

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Today, President Obama signed the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2013 into law. The highly anticipated signing secures needed protections and services for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

"This is an important and historic day as our national renews its commitment to supporting victims of domestic violence and to ending this epidemic in our country," said Patti Seger, executive director of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV). "We thank President Obama for his support, and we especially thank Vice President Biden—the original author of VAWA—who has demonstrated a commitment to protecting victims throughout his career."

Several key improvements are included in VAWA 2013. A landmark provision giving Tribal governments authority to protect Native victims from non-Native abusers will help address the vastly disproportionate level of violence that has historically been directed at Native women. Moreover, the bill will include enhanced protections for immigrant victims, better ensure lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims can access services, and add important housing protections for victims. The bill also preserves and maintains core funding for life-saving victim services.

"This law reaches all victims," said Seger. "Throughout the reauthorization process, advocates, survivors and supporters remained united in calling for a comprehensive bill that left no victim without increased opportunity for justice and support."

Seger continued, "In Wisconsin, we are especially grateful for the leadership of Congresswoman Gwen Moore, who was instrumental in bringing this bill to the President's desk. Survivors and advocates around the country recognize Congresswoman Moore's efforts."

"We are also very thankful to Senator Tammy Baldwin. She played a leading role to ensure VAWA protects older adults who are abused. In addition, WCADV thanks the other members of the Wisconsin Congressional delegation who supported VAWA, Congressmen Kind, Pocan, Duffy and Ryan."

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