



March 25, 2019

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U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I am writing in support of the "Violence Against Women Act" (VAWA) of 2019 (H.R. 1585). As this year marks the 25th Anniversary of VAWA, it's important to strengthen and expand the tools used to combat violence against women. This historic legislation plays a momentous role in providing protections for all victims of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual assault – crimes for which the risk of victimization is highest for women. Most importantly, it holds abusers accountable.

In its 25-year history, the mandates in this bill facilitate the investigation and prosecution of abuses against all women. Since Congress passed the initial VAWA of 1994 as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, the provisions in this legislation were improved in the VAWA reauthorization of 2000, 2005, and 2013. During those times, critical new provisions were added to ensure that LGBTQ Americans receive equal treatment for domestic violence services and to let Native Americans on reservations go to tribal courts for abuse cases. H.R. 1585 equally builds upon the improvements tailored to all victims' needs, in addition to preserving progress made to shield the LGBTQ, Native American, and immigrant women communities from abuse and crime associated with domestic violence.

H.R. 1585 also makes our communities safer. It would enhance the training for law enforcement workers and officials. It improves collaboration efforts between the criminal justice system, research organizations, private organizations as well as the schools, social service agencies, and public health organizations where AFSCME members serve and work. H.R. 1585 also expands services for older survivors, and ensures that all 50 states and territories include Unemployment Insurance (UI) and housing protections for victims who all too often are left with maintaining economic security by themselves. Finally, we are encouraged that during the committee markup of this legislation, members from both sides of the aisle agreed to add an amendment to reinforce the reporting requirements for Native American women, and a provision that would address female genital mutilation. We hope that both will become law.

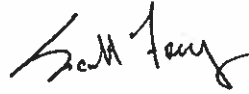
The time to reauthorize VAWA is now. Every five years, members of Congress can reauthorize VAWA to renew the bill and improve upon vital services and critical

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

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programs. We strongly encourage bipartisan support again this year. Please vote yes on H.R.1585 when it's taken up for consideration by the full House for a vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Frey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "S".

Scott Frey
Director of Federal Government Affairs

SF:KLS:mc