

Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20515

April 9, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
H-204,
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Republican Leader McCarthy and Minority Leader Schumer,

As you know, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) plays a vital role in supporting programs that help protect individuals throughout the United States from crime and domestic abuse. In light of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the number of persons forced to shelter in place or quarantine with abusive partners or spouses continues to rise. It is now more imperative than ever that we work together on a bipartisan basis to ensure that this pandemic does not lend to increased instances of domestic violence or abuse that go unaddressed or unpunished.

Over a year ago on April 4, 2019, the House passed H.R.1585 the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019 with broad bipartisan support in an effort to reinstate the program which lapsed on February 19, 2019. To this day, VAWA remains unauthorized. While there is still funding available for these important programs housed under the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), leaving some of the most vulnerable members of our society open to abuse is unacceptable, particularly in the midst of a global health pandemic.

As you work to build upon legislation like H.R. 748, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, given the new realities and dangers that at-risk persons face due to shelter in place and stay home orders, it is imperative that you include the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act in any next piece of legislation to move through Congress. We urge you to include additional language granting flexibilities to these programs, and grantees, as they navigate the new realities and challenges posed by Coronavirus. Further, it is critical that additional funding be provided immediately for facilities and programs that assist victims of domestic violence to safely shelter in place. Those at risk for abuse should not have to choose between exposure to COVID-19 or their physical and mental safety and wellbeing.

We look forward to working with you and urge you to consider those most vulnerable as you work toward solutions to strengthen our families and communities.

Sincerely,

Rodney Davis
Member of Congress

Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress

Susan Brooks
Member of Congress

Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress

Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Don Young
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

Jennifer Gonzalez-Colon
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

Lori Trahan
Member of Congress

Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Cindy Axne
Member of Congress

Troy Balderson
Member of Congress

Bill Johnson
Member of Congress

Anthony Brindisi
Member of Congress

David Trone
Member of Congress

Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress

John Katko
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress

Fred Upton
Member of Congress

David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress

Garret Graves
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress

Dina Titus
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Will Hurd
Member of Congress

Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress

David E. Price
Member of Congress

Gus Bilirakis
Member of Congress

Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress

Steve Stivers
Member of Congress

Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress

Anthony Gonzalez
Member of Congress

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress

Mike Levin
Member of Congress

Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

David P. Joyce
Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Ann Wagner
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

Jim Himes
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

Jim Cooper
Member of Congress

Tom Suozzi
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

Mike Bost
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Brendan F. Boyle
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Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

Mike Doyle
Member of Congress

Pete Olson
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress

Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

Conor Lamb
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Theodore E. Deutch
Member of Congress

John R. Carter
Member of Congress

Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress

Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

Gregory Meeks
Member of Congress

Xochitl Torres Small
Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

David Scott
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

Darren Soto
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

Pete Stauber
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress

Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress

Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress

Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

Jason Crow
Member of Congress