

2011-J3490

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION urging the New York State Congressional delegation to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

WHEREAS, Intimate partner violence, also known as domestic violence, is a serious public health epidemic; and

WHEREAS, This violence, which includes domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking occurs every day across this nation and throughout New York State; and

WHEREAS, This violence manifests itself in emotional, physical, mental, sexual, and economic abuses; and

WHEREAS, Annually, the economic impact of domestic violence nationwide is approximately \$8 billion; and

WHEREAS, This abuse negatively affects victims and their children; and

WHEREAS, Domestic violence also has an impact on our neighborhoods, our communities and our State; and

WHEREAS, In a pioneering attempt to attend to such violence and its aftermath, in 1994 the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was first authorized; and

WHEREAS, According to a Congressional Research Service Report entitled "Violence Against Women Act: History and Federal Funding", VAWA emphasizes funding of law enforcement efforts as well as educational and social programs to prevent crime; and

WHEREAS, The report further explains VAWA funding is focused on helping state, local and Indian tribal governments to strengthen law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, In New York State, VAWA grants have been awarded for direct services provided by district attorneys, police departments, courts and victim services organizations; and

WHEREAS, According to the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, most local domestic violence programs receive funding through VAWA grants; and

WHEREAS, Despite improvements in services to combat domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking, New York State continues to need such funding; and

WHEREAS, According to the Annual Report of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, local domestic violence programs answered over 185,000 phone calls last year, and served over 47,000 individuals and families with non-residential domestic violence services, as well as housed over 15,000 victims of domestic violence and their children across New York State; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, 14,500 adults and 17,400 kids were denied shelter, and 1,030 adults and children entered domestic violence transitional living shelters; and

WHEREAS, A 2011 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey report states on average, 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States, based on a survey conducted in 2010; and

WHEREAS, According to that same study, 1 in 6 women (16.2%) and 1 in 19 men (5.2%) have experienced stalking victimization at some point in their lifetime in which they felt fearful or believed they or someone close to them would be harmed or killed; and

WHEREAS, Women are more than 13 times more likely to be raped and twice as likely to experience other forms of sexual violence than men; and

WHEREAS, 41.6% of women and 13.9% of men reported being injured at the hands of an intimate partner; and

WHEREAS, VAWA redefined the way domestic violence and other forms of violence against women are handled by establishing funding streams for changes in law enforcement, improvements in the criminal justice system, and shelters and services for victims; and

WHEREAS, VAWA's concept of a coordinated community response that encourages collaboration between law enforcement, judicial personnel and the public and private sectors in order to address the needs of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking is considered to be one of its most vital achievements; and

WHEREAS, Notably, VAWA also increased public awareness of the issues of domestic violence, sexual violence and stalking; and

WHEREAS, VAWA was reauthorized in both 2000 and 2005; and

WHEREAS, In November of 2011, Senators Leahy and Crapo introduced VAWA to be reauthorized; and

WHEREAS, The 2011 reauthorization of VAWA should enhance several areas

including housing, workplace and military protections for victims, accountability for offenders and prevention programs to break the cycle of violence; and

WHEREAS, Over the past 17 years, VAWA has provided programs and services to tens of thousands of individuals affected by domestic violence and their families; and

WHEREAS, On the 17th anniversary of the passage of VAWA, the lead sponsor of the original VAWA, Vice President Joseph Biden, called on "a new generation to take action to reduce the high rates of violence and assault that continue to threaten young men and women across the country"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the New York State Congressional delegation be and hereby is respectfully memorialized by the Legislative Body to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA); and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to each member of the Congressional delegation from the State of New York.