

Duckworth, Durbin and Senate Democrats Introduce House-Passed Violence Against Women Act

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – US Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) joined all 47 Democratic senators in introducing the Senate companion to the House-passed [*Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act*](#).

The bill, which would reauthorize VAWA through 2024, preserves advancements made in previous reauthorizations and includes a number of additional improvements to the current law.

“The House passing the Violence Against Women Act is a step forward in telling survivors ‘I see you. I believe you. I support you,’” Duckworth said. “Now, the Senate needs to reauthorize and expand VAWA so that every survivor can access the lifesaving care they need. Domestic and sexual violence is all too common across this nation, especially for Native American women, and every survivor deserves easy access to resources and support that can help during their time of need. We cannot abandon them.”

“The Violence Against Women Act has been a lifeline for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in Illinois and across the country,” Durbin said. “The House passed its version of VAWA this year, but it remains buried in Leader McConnell’s do-nothing Senate. It would be shameful to let such a vital bill languish when it provides valuable and lifesaving assistance that Illinois needs for years to come.”

Key provisions in the bill:

Protects Native American women by improving tribal access to federal crime information databases and reaffirming tribal criminal jurisdiction over non-Indian perpetrators of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking for all federally recognized Indian tribes and Alaskan Natives.

Explicitly states that grant recipients are allowed to train staff and others on identifying and stopping discrimination against LGBT individuals. Service providers currently remain uncertain about whether they can use grants to train for this.

Reauthorizes and updates the SMART Prevention Program to reduce dating violence, help children who have been exposed to violence and engage men in preventing violence.

Expands grants under the Public Health Service Act to support the implementation of training programs to improve the capacity of early childhood programs to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking among the families they serve.

Provides services, protection, and justice for young victims of violence, including extending the Rape Prevention and Education grant program, addressing bullying of young people, improving grants focused on prevention education for students and expanding relevant training for school-based and campus health centers.

Preserves and expands housing protections for survivors.

Provides economic security assistance for survivors by reauthorizing the National Resource Center on Workplace Responses. Protects employees from being fired because they are survivors of sexual assault or domestic violence and protects survivors' eligibility to receive unemployment insurance.

Enhances judicial and law enforcement tools through a reauthorization of the Justice Department's STOP Violence Against Women Formula Program, known as the STOP Program. Authorizes the use of STOP Program grants to expand the use of grant funding for programs focused on increasing survivor, law enforcement and community safety; increase legal assistance for dependent children in appropriate circumstances, and develop and enforce firearm surrender policies.

Protects the Justice Department's Office on Violence Against Women from being merged or consolidated into any other Justice Department office.

Helps prevent "intimate partner" homicides by including provisions expanding firearms laws to prohibit persons convicted of dating violence from possessing firearms, prohibiting persons convicted of misdemeanor stalking from possessing firearms and prohibiting individuals subject to ex parte protective orders from possessing firearms.