

National Alliance to End Sexual Violence

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National Task Force Proposes New Sexual Assault Services Act

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As you may know, the Violence Against Women Act is due to be reauthorized in 2005. First enacted as part of the 1994 Crime Bill and reauthorized in 2000, this important federal legislation has been critical in assisting local communities in preventing and intervening in domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, for over 10 years. Unfortunately, there has never been a federal funding stream dedicated entirely to the provision of direct services for victims of sexual violence. The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women (Task Force), an umbrella entity under which VAWA reauthorization and expansion is sought, has worked to craft a legislative proposal (known as VAWA 2005) to reauthorize VAWA. The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV) is an active member of the Task Force.

Under the Services and Outreach title of VAWA 2005, a new program called the **Sexual Assault Services Act (SASA)**, would create a desperately-needed funding stream for direct services for sexual assault victims, as well as provide resources for state sexual assault coalitions, whose assistance is invaluable to service providers nationwide.

SASA would authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services through the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to award grants to assist tribes, territories and states in their efforts to provide services to adult and minor sexual assault victims and their family and household members. Grants could be used for general intervention and advocacy, including accompaniment through medical, criminal justice, and social support systems, support services, and related assistance. SASA funds also could be used to provide training and technical assistance relating to sexual assault for various organizations, including governments, law enforcement, courts, nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, and professionals working in legal services, social services, and health care. SASA also would authorize grants for nonprofit organizations that provide culturally-specific intervention and related assistance for victims of sexual assault. The Act would authorize \$80,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2005-2009.

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Meet NAESV's D.C. Representatives

Because of the intense focus on the reauthorization of VAWA and the ongoing federal appropriations process, the NAESV Board of Directors is pleased to announce we are dedicating more resources to increase the activities of our Washington, D.C. representatives from the firm of Washington Partners, LLC. Ellen Fern, Senior Vice President, and Lyndsay Pinkus, Legislative Associate, will continue and expand the work they've been doing monitoring all legislative activities on behalf of NAESV, state sexual assault coalitions, and sexual assault victims and survivors.

NAESV Board President Conducts Congressional Visits

On January 27, recently-elected NAESV Board President Marybeth Carter traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with key staff from the following congressional offices: Representatives Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), Lois Capps (D-CA), and Hilda Solis (D-CA); as well as Senators Joe Biden (D-DE) and Diane Feinstein (D-CA). All of the offices were pleased to meet with Marybeth and very interested to hear about both the work of state sexual assault coalitions and the proposed Sexual Assault Services Act (SASA) which we hope will be included in VAWA 2005.

Of special note, Senator Feinstein's staff shared with us a bill that the Senator had just introduced, along with Sens. Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Charles Grassley (R-IA), John Cornyn (R-TX), and Jon Kyl (R-AZ), called The Gang Prevention and Effective Deterrence Act of 2005 (S. 155). The purpose of this legislation is to tackle gang violence by increasing criminal penalties and targeting law enforcement efforts at gangs who recruit children. For the first time, the definition of a "predicate gang crime," which is chargeable under Federal or State law and punishable by imprisonment for more than one year, includes sexual assault. The legislation also allows 16- or 17-year olds to be prosecuted as an adult for committing, conspiring, soliciting or attempting to commit sexual assault.

We will continue our outreach to members of Congress to discuss not only the reauthorization of VAWA, including SASA, but other relevant legislation and to advocate for more funding for other programs, such as rape prevention funds, that provide resources for state sexual assault coalitions.

National Task Force Kicks-Off National VAWA 2005 Campaign

On January 28, 2005 The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women kicked off its national campaign to reauthorize VAWA with a very successful strategic planning meeting in Washington, D.C. This meeting included a presentation and discussion of the programs included in the draft reauthorization bill, including the Sexual Assault Services Act (SASA). Over 100 individuals attended the event, representing organizations that work on such issues as immigration and trafficking; prevention programs and services; sexual assault; communities of color; dating violence and stalking; issues surrounding youth and teen domestic violence; violence and Native American Women; housing; faith-based programs; men against rape; programs for health care providers; and economic security for victims.

Over the next few weeks the National Task Force will be finalizing VAWA 2005 materials, launching a Web site, and designing media, grassroots and coalition building plans. We will be reaching out to our state coalitions to engage you in these efforts by joining list serves, circulating important information, writing letters of support and other activities.

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The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV), formerly the National Alliance of Sexual Assault Coalitions, is a social change organization dedicated to creating a social, political and economic environment where sexual violence no longer exists. The NAESV Board of Directors consists of leaders of state sexual assault coalitions, law and policy experts who work to promote the organization's mission to advance and strengthen public policy on behalf of state coalitions, individuals, and other entities working to end sexual violence. Most importantly, the NAESV advocates on behalf of the victim/survivors—women, children and men—who have needlessly suffered the serious trauma of sexual violence and envisions a world free from sexual violence.

Lifetime Television to Host "Stop Violence Week" in Washington, D.C

Lifetime Television will host the fourth annual "Stop Violence Week" in Washington, DC from March 7-11 2005 as part of its Emmy-Award winning campaign, "Our Lifetime Commitment: Stop Violence Against Women."

On Monday, March 7, there will be a special screening of Lifetime's new documentary about the devastating impact of sexual assault and domestic violence on women and their families, produced by Oscar-winning filmmaker Maryann De Leo and Grammy-winning singer, songwriter, and activist Michael Bolton.

On Wednesday, March 9, Lifetime and the Wireless Foundation will host a "Champions for Change" reception. The reception will honor women and men who are making a difference on this issue at the Andrew J. Mellon Auditorium in Washington, DC. To RSVP for either of these events, email Lyndsay Pinkus at lpinkus@wpllc.net.

As you may know, Lifetime is an active supporter of the VAWA III reauthorization work, sponsoring a reception after the January 28 strategy meeting and offering to pay for the writing and printing of VAWA III promotional materials. Members of the National Task Force to End Sexual & Domestic Violence Against Women will be working with Lifetime staff throughout this process. To find out more about Lifetime's campaign to stop violence against women, visit

<http://www.lifetime.com/community/olc/violence/index.html>.