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Congressional Budget and Appropriations

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It was almost the night before Christmas...and about the only things not stirring on Capitol Hill over the past two weeks have been the mice. To say that things are confusing and chaotic is understating the situation. Several critical, "must pass" pieces of legislation remain unfinished. Several other high priority bills, previously thought to be "must pass" bills are also close to the finish line but not quite complete. And then, of course, there are the controversial bills that the Congress would like to pass that are getting veto threats from the White House and non-stop media attention.

Predictably, most of this unfinished business pertains to spending. The bill most pertinent to sexual assault advocates is the Fiscal Year 2006 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (LHHS) Appropriations Act. This bill funds all programs within the Department of Health and Human Services which of course includes the CDC as well as the Public Health and Human Services Block Grant program. The Conference Report for LHHS failed in the House two weeks ago. A new conference was appointed and a new bill - altered only minimally - was passed on a vote of 215-213 by the House on Wednesday, December 14. The tension then migrated to the Senate. The LHHS bill was debated on Thursday, December 15, but because of all the other unfinished business, the vote count remained uncertain and, therefore, the debate was incomplete. In other words, Senators continued to trade votes on this bill for votes or amendments on other legislation that was also being debated at the time.

Finally, in the very late hours of December 22, the LHHS was finally passed by voice vote. Its passage (which would have been defeated if a roll call vote was called) was ensured by the final "deal" struck by Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN) and Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV). A unanimous consent agreement stated the LHHS bill (H.R. 3010) would be cleared once the House adopts, without amendment, an enrolling resolution that modifies the Defense spending bill (H.R. 2863) to strike its Arctic National Wildlife Refuge provisions. That vote is expected Thursday. The LHHS bill would then be sent to the President for his signature.

The conference report that was approved by both the House and Senate *does* include \$100 million for the Public Health and Health Services Block Grant as well as \$140,440,000 the Center for Injury Control. While a line item for the Rape Prevention and Education program was not included, we assume that will mean level funding - \$44 million - for the program.

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VAWA Reauthorized!

On December 16 and 17 respectively, the House and Senate voted to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 2005. With the President's signature, VAWA 2005 will become law, and sexual assault advocates have much to celebrate.

NAESV is pleased to highlight the following provisions of VAWA 2005:

- **The Sexual Assault Services Program (SASA)** creates a new, separate and direct funding stream dedicated to sexual assault services. Under the formula grant, funding will be distributed to states, territories, tribes, as well as state, territorial and tribal sexual assault coalitions. Funding can be used to provide services, training and technical assistance. A discretionary grant program for non-profit organizations serving Communities of Color is also established. *The program is authorized at \$50 million.*
- **Grants to Reduce Violence Against Women on Campus** funds colleges and universities to prevent and respond to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking against students, faculty and staff. *The program was reauthorized at \$15 million – an increase of \$5 million.*
- **Rural Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Prevention Grants** reauthorizes and expands the existing education, training and services grant programs that address violence against women in rural areas. New language expands the program coverage to sexual assault, dating violence, child abuse and stalking. It also expands eligibility from rural states to rural communities, increasing access to rural sections of otherwise highly populated states. Funding will also be available to provide technical assistance to sexual assault grantees. *The program is authorized at \$55 million – an increase of \$15 million.*
- **The Center for Sex Offender Management Program**, funds training and technical assistance for the criminal justice system, states, and local jurisdictions to prevent sexual victimization through effective management of convicted sex offenders. *The program was reauthorized at \$5 million – an increase of \$2 million.*
- **The Rape Prevention Education Program** funds programs to increase awareness and provide education and training to prevent sexual assault. *The program was reauthorized at \$80 million. Within RPE, funding for the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, was reauthorized at \$1.5 million – an increase of \$500,000.*

For a complete summary of the provisions related to sexual assault, see the attached document.

Senator Joe Biden (D-DE), one of the chief architects of the bill, said this in his floor statement urging other Senators to vote for VAWA on December 16, 2005:

"I rise today to express my appreciation to my colleagues for passing for the second time this session, the Violence Against Women Act of 2005...what emerges is a balanced bill that strikes the right balance between rejuvenating core programs, making targeted improvements, and responsibly expanding the Violence Against Women Act to reach the needs of America's families..."

Sexual violence is a crime that affects children and adults across our country. Unfortunately, rape has been a crime shrouded in secrecy and shame. Sexual assault survivors can experience physical and emotional problems for years. Approximately 1,315 rape crisis centers across the country help victims of rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, and incest rebuild their lives by providing a range of vital services to survivors. But unfortunately, many rape crisis centers are under funded and understaffed. They are constantly in a crisis mode, responding to the needs of all victims--male, female as well as children--and are incapable of undertaking large-scale prevention efforts in their communities.

In response to this overwhelming need, our bill will provide increased resources to serve sexual assault victims. It includes, for the first time, a dedicated Federal funding stream for sexual assault programs through the proposed Sexual Assault Services Program, SASA. SASA will fund direct services to victims, including general intervention and advocacy, accompaniment through the medical and criminal justice processes, support services, and related assistance."

VAWA Reauthorized! Cont.

NAESV was a key player throughout VAWA negotiations and was an active member of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women that worked on VAWA 2005 for the last two years. The contribution of the field in providing grassroots support and pressure at critical times throughout this process was crucial to our success in making the needs of sexual assault victims a priority. Thank you for all your hard work.

The next step is to get SASA and all other programs that serve sexual assault victims actually funded in the fiscal year 2007 budget – no easy task! Stay tuned for the second half of the battle.

Rape Prevention Education Legislation Introduced

On December 8, 2005, Representatives Michael Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Nita Lowey (D-NY) introduced H.R.4478, legislation to amend the Public Health Service Act to extend the program of grants for rape prevention education. These Members introduced this bill in a “last minute” effort to help ensure the Rape Prevention Education program was reauthorized as part of VAWA 2005. Using the bill as leverage, both Fitzpatrick and Lowey urged House Leadership to include the program in the larger VAWA bill.

On Friday, December 9, Rep. Fitzgerald held a tele-press conference on H.R. 4478. Barbara Clark, Executive Director of the Network of Victims Assistance, and Delilah Rumburg, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, participated in the press conference.

RPE provides more than \$42 million in federal funding to support education seminars, hotline operations, training programs, college awareness programs, and information on date rape drugs across the country.

Controversy Swirls Around Army's Proposed Sexual Assault Victim Database

In an October 25, 2005 Federal Register notice, the Department of the Army announced its proposal to create a centralized database of alleged assault victims and assailants to its existing inventory of records systems, “effective on November 25, 2005 unless comments are received that would result in a contrary determination.”

Who would be included in the system? Any individual, military or civilian, who has been identified as the victim of a sexual assault allegedly committed by a member of the Armed Forces. Any member of the Armed Forces who has been identified as the victim of a sexual assault allegedly committed by a civilian. Any individual, military or civilian, who has been identified as the perpetrator of an alleged sexual assault against a member of the Armed Forces. Any member of the Armed Forces who has been identified as the perpetrator of an alleged sexual assault against a civilian.

What information would be included? Name, Social Security Number (SSN), date of birth, demographic information, and Service data; investigation related information which may include summary of the assault, data from police reports, DNA processing dates; documents created as a result of the assistance provided; medical records data relating to initial and final treatment dates and aggregate count of intermediate medical treatment contacts with the victim; similar records/reports relating to victim support extended by installation and/or unit advocates; and reports of actions taken by commanders against offenders.

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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.



NAESV to join NNEDV in National Lobby Day

NAESV is thrilled to announce an exciting collaboration for the 8th Annual NCADV National Lobby Day. NCADV is proud to cosponsor this year's Lobby Day with the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence. All domestic violence and sexual assault advocates are invited to come to Washington DC for a week's worth of events including a reception and breakfast with Members of Congress, congressional briefings, informational sessions on VAWA and Appropriations, and many additional sponsored activities. Advocates will be lobbying for fiscal year 2007 appropriations funding for existing VAWA programs and hopefully new programs created by VAWA 2005, such as the Sexual Assault and Services Program (SASA), a newly created program which provides a dedicated federal funding stream for sexual assault victims. Details and dates are still being finalized, but we tentatively plan on this year's event to be in early April, Sexual Assault Awareness Month, to emphasize both domestic and sexual violence. Look for upcoming details regarding dates, registration, agenda, and accommodations on the NAESV and NCADV websites, on the NAESV policy list serve and in the NAESV Policy Update Newsletter.

Washington Partners, LLC to Expand Contract

NAESV is pleased to announce that it is expanding its contract with Washington Partners, LLC. In addition to legislative representation provided by Ellen Fern, the firm's Senior Vice President, WPLLC will provide association management and other administrative responsibilities. This is just another small step in our efforts to grow NAESV into a national organization with a Washington, D.C. presence.