



NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE Policy Update

SEPTEMBER 2006

Dear Sexual Assault Colleagues,

The NAESV has worked diligently over the past several years to advance the services and funding for sexual assault coalitions, rape crisis centers, sexual assault-related programs and allied programs that address sexual and domestic violence and stalking. To achieve this, we have partnered extensively with national, tribal, state, and community organizations in order to educate Congress on these issues. These partner relationships are critical for attaining federal resources and policies related to ending sexual violence and assisting victims/survivors and their families. Of particular success in the area of sexual violence is the recent creation of the Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP), which was authorized as part of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 2005. This Policy Update briefly reviews the background, strategies, and current status of this new program that will assist victims/survivors of sexual violence.

Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP)

An Historical Partnership

The Sexual Assault Service Program (SASP) was created to address funding needs expressed by sexual assault coalitions and rape crisis centers for direct services, including counseling and support. Several state and national organizations collaborated to write and advocate for the passage of SASP as part of the reauthorization of VAWA. These organizations included the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR), the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC), the National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault (SCESA), the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV), and the Rape Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), along with dozens of state sexual assault coalitions as well as national and state domestic violence coalitions and programs.

The organizations listed above were the core working group focused on SASP and became the “SASA Partners” during the VAWA reauthorization process (during the

authorization process SASP was known as the Sexual Assault Services Act, upon passage Act turned to Program). Representatives of this group worked closely and met via teleconference calls on a regular basis for several years. Together, the SASA Partners successfully navigated the legislative policy waters towards passage the of SASP.

Placement of SASP

The process for designating SASP within a specific department of the U.S. Department of Justice is underway. The Attorney General has designated that SASP be run out of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP). SASP Partners are in dialogue right now with OJP representatives about the placement of SASP to a specific component within the larger office. SASP Partners wrote a letter outlining key qualities needed in any department in which SASP is placed in (e.g., experience with grant contracting; experience with crime victim's needs, preferably sexual assault; and more).

Appropriations for SASP

SASP Partners have continued their collaborative relationship in seeking funds for SASP in the fiscal year 2007 and 2008 federal budgets. SASP is authorized at \$50M, yet the SASP Partners are told by legislators that due to the overall fiscal environment, full funding for SASP is a long-shot and that initial funding in smaller, incremental steps is a more obtainable goal.

The fiscal year 2007 federal budget was developed in the Summer and Fall of 2005, before the passage of VAWA 2005, thus precluding the inclusion of any of the newly authorized programs in VAWA in the President's proposed budget for fiscal year 2007, which was presented to Congress in February 2006. Congress is finalizing fiscal year 2007 appropriations, and SASP Partners, along with the Campaign for Funding to End Domestic and Sexual Violence task force (composed of numerous national domestic violence and sexual assault victims/survivor rights groups and national nonprofits supporting VAWA), developed an overall amendment strategy to obtain funding for some of the newly authorized programs in VAWA 2005. Domestic violence and sexual assault advocates reached out to several Members of Congress to ascertain their interest in offering various amendments prioritized by the task force. SASP was one of the priorities the task force identified.

After reaching out to both Republicans and Democrats, the only Member of Congress who was interested in putting forth an amendment for SASP funding was Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT). Rep. DeLauro was willing to offer an amendment on the Floor of the House of Representatives for \$10M. At the same time, Rep. Jim Inslee (D-WA) volunteered to offer a \$10M amendment to fund a program focused on children who witness violence, teen dating violence and the establishment of a sexual assault registry for Native Americans all newly authorized programs in VAWA.

Although the SASP Partners initially attempted to obtain bi-partisan support for the SASP amendment, we were not successful. The SASP Partners were faced with the decision to either go forward with Rep. DeLauro in the lead or not proceed with an amendment at all. Based on the advice of NAESV's government relations consultant,

along with the Republican consultant hired by a core group of domestic violence and sexual assault groups to advise on an overall funding strategy for all VAWA appropriations, NAESV and several of the other SASP Partner national organizations chose to support DeLauro's offer to introduce an amendment to obtain funding. RAINN expressed the concern about long-term impact on Congressional support if the SASP Partners proceeded with supporting an amendment offered only by a Democrat. This was a difference in opinion about strategy, not a question of RAINN's support for SASP funding.

As the process moved forward, Reps. DeLauro and Inslee worked with Republican and Democratic staff regarding each of their amendments. Staff on both sides of the aisle were informed of what the overall goals of the sexual assault and domestic violence groups were, and this included outreach to Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA), Chairman of the Commerce, Justice, State and Science Appropriations Subcommittee from which VAWA programs receive funds. In the end, Reps. DeLauro and Inslee worked with Chairman Wolf on a compromise measure which resulted in one amendment offered for \$10M with \$5M going to SASP and \$5M going to the other programs. In return for combining these amendments, Chairman Wolf promised to support the amendment on the Floor of the House of Representatives as well as in conference committee with the Senate.

Not only did the amendment for SASP funding pass in the House, \$5M was included in the Senate Commerce, Justice Science Appropriations bill passed by the Senate Appropriations Committee in July. As a result, there is no need for an amendment strategy in the Senate. While we still have several months before we know what the final outcome will be for SASP's fiscal year 2007 appropriations, we are pleased that right now, SASP is funded for \$5M in both the House and Senate bills.

As we move forward, NAESV and the entire SASP Partnership remain committed to seeking full funding for SASP at its authorized level. The strategy to attain that goal is still a developing path that changes frequently in light of national events, national leadership, and other national action that must be considered when advocating for a new funding stream within the federal government.

Adam Walsh Act

Questions in the field have also been raised about the impact on SASP funding of new language authorizing an annual federal grant to RAINN found in the Adam Walsh Act. The Adam Walsh Act was passed by Congress in late July, and now Congress has the difficult task of trying to find appropriations (i.e., funds) for these programs in fiscal year 2007. To clarify: SASP and the Adam Walsh Act are separate and thus each has its own funding stream. Each year, members of the Appropriations Committee will have to make funding decisions separately for SASP and programs found within the Adam Walsh Act.

Several coalitions and national groups have also raised concerns that language included in the Act potentially duplicates the work of state coalitions with their members, as well as the work of the Resource Sharing Project (RSP) and the National Sexual Violence

Resource Center (NSVRC). NAESV will work with RAINN, members of Congress and the administration of DOJ to ensure that duplication does not occur. In addition, there is language that directs OJJDP to oversee and coordinate all federal sexual assault activities. We have been told by RAINN that this language was mistakenly included in the bill, and it will be removed through a technical correction.

Federal Earmarks

Lastly, there are other federal funding earmarks for national organizations which legislators seek each year. To date, NAESV has chosen not to pursue this type of funding for NAESV/NAESV Foundation. NAESV's primary focus is to gain funding for the SASP program and to ensure funding levels for VOCA and the Preventive Health and Human Services Block Grant in order to support funding for community-level rape crisis programs and state and territorial sexual assault coalitions.

Collaboration

NAESV has worked diligently to forge collaborative relationships with national sexual assault-related organizations. These organizations have reached out to work with us, as well. Working collaboratively is crucial in order to leverage the strength, knowledge, skills, resources and unity needed to increase the services available for victims/survivors of sexual assault and make the elimination of sexual violence a reality. Each organization has its own mission, purpose and services; yet, our collaboration makes a unified stance on many important issues, such as the need for funding for the Sexual Assault Service Program. NAESV values this collaboration and will continue to forge alliances with these and other organizations in order to reach our goals.