



CO-SPONSOR THE INTERNATIONAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Every year, violence devastates the lives of millions of women and girls globally. Violence against women and girls is a tremendous human rights problem around the world. It includes rape, domestic violence, acid burning, dowry deaths, so-called “honor killings”, human trafficking, female genital cutting and more. The United Nations Development Fund for Women estimates that up to one in three women globally will be beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime with rates reaching 70 percent in some countries, according to the World Health Organization. Violence destabilizes countries, impedes economic progress, and prevents women from raising healthy children.

Current U.S. efforts to address violence against women are well-intentioned but fragmented and piecemeal. There is no systematic review of best practices and little measurement of programs’ impact. There is no coordination within or between the agencies that administer the few small projects.

Senators Joseph Biden (D-DE) and Richard Lugar (R-IN), Chairman and Ranking Republican of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, have authored the bi-partisan International Violence Against Women Act (S.2279). Representative Howard Berman (D, CA), Chair of House Foreign Affairs Committee, introduced the bill House (H. R. 5927). The International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA) creates a comprehensive, integrated approach to addressing violence. Decreasing violence against women and girls would help achieve US foreign policy goals of defeating terrorism, creating prosperity, supporting good governance, and ending the HIV epidemic. The legislation was designed by AIUSA, Family Violence Prevention Fund and Women Thrive Worldwide with input from 40 international and 150 US-based groups with relevant expertise.

Specifically, the bill would:

- Support survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and prevent violence.
- Integrate efforts to end violence against women and girls into existing, appropriate U.S. foreign assistance programs.
- Establish one central State Department Office for Women’s Global Initiatives to coordinate the United States policies, programs, and resources that deal with women’s issues.
- Create a five-year strategy to fight violence against women in 10-20 selected countries.
- Incorporate best practices on addressing violence against women into programs that prevent violence, encourage legal reform and changes in public attitudes, promote access to economic opportunity projects and safe schools, and support healthcare. It authorizes \$175 million for these programs.
- Enable the US government to develop a faster and more efficient response to violence against women in humanitarian emergencies and conflict-related situations. It requires training and reporting mechanisms for humanitarian and other workers.
- Enhance the capacity of the US government to develop emergency measures to respond to mass rape including efforts to provide direct services to victims and hold accountable perpetrators.
- Encourage U.S. collaboration and funding for UN efforts to end violence against women.
- Build the effectiveness of overseas non-governmental organizations - particularly women’s nongovernmental organizations - in addressing violence against women.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA RECOMMENDATION:

- ✓ Members of Congress should co-sponsor the I-VAWA (S.2279 & HR 5927) and seek its speedy adoption.

Amnesty International is a grassroots organization with 2.2 million members worldwide working to promote and defend human rights. For information, contact Maureen Greenwood-Basken at 202-544-0200 or mgreenwood@aiusa.org, or www.amnestyusa.org/ivawa.