



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

May 15, 2012
(House Rules)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 4970 – Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012

(Rep. Adams, R-FL, and 40 cosponsors)

The Administration strongly opposes H.R. 4970, a bill that would undermine the core principles of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). VAWA is a landmark piece of legislation that first passed the Congress in 1994 and has twice been reauthorized with overwhelming bipartisan support, each time with important improvements to strengthen VAWA. The Act transformed the Nation's response to violence against women and brought critically needed resources to States and local communities to address these crimes.

H.R. 4970 retreats from this forward progress by failing to include several critical provisions that are part of the Senate-passed VAWA reauthorization bill. For instance, H.R. 4970 fails to provide for concurrent special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction by tribal authorities over non-Indians, and omits clarification of tribal courts' full civil jurisdiction regarding certain protection orders over non-Indians. Given that three out of five Native American women experience domestic violence in their lifetime, these omissions in H.R. 4970 are unacceptable. The bill also fails to include language that would prohibit discrimination against LGBT victims in VAWA grant programs. No sexual assault or domestic violence victim should be beaten, hurt, or killed because they could not access needed support, assistance, and protection. In addition, H.R. 4970 does not include important improvements to the Clery Act found in the Senate-passed bill that would address the high rates of dating violence and sexual assault experienced by young people in college and other higher education institutions. The bill also weakens critical new provisions in the Senate-passed bill that would improve safety for victims living in subsidized housing.

H.R. 4970 also takes direct aim at immigrant victims of domestic violence and sexual assault by removing critical protections currently in law. H.R. 4970 allows abusers to be notified when a victim files a VAWA self-petition for relief, and it eliminates the path to citizenship for U visa holders – victims of serious crimes such as torture, rape, and domestic violence – who are cooperating with law enforcement in the investigation or prosecution of these crimes. These proposals senselessly remove existing legal protections, undermine VAWA's core purpose of protecting victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, frustrate important law enforcement objectives, and jeopardize victims by placing them directly in harm's way.

The Administration urges the House to find common ground with the bipartisan Senate-passed bill and consider and pass legislation that will protect all victims. H.R. 4970 rolls back existing law and removes long-standing protections for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault – crimes that predominately affect women. If the President is presented with H.R. 4970, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill.

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