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Congresswoman Matsui Helps Introduce Violence Against Women Act

Legislation Provides Life-Saving Support to Victims of Violence and Strengthens Communities

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Matsui joined several of her Democratic colleagues in introducing [H.R. 4271, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012](#). This legislation strengthens the abilities of the Federal Government, states, law enforcement, and service providers to combat domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and helps to provide for a coordinated community response.

“Far too many women continue to live in fear – in their own homes, at work, walking down the street,” said Congresswoman Matsui. “It is essential for these women, and all past and future victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, that we strengthen and reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.”

The Violence Against Women Act provides for such programs and services as community violence prevention programs; STOP grants; protection for victims who are evicted from their homes because of events related to domestic violence; funding for victim assistance services; and legal aid for survivors of violence. Since the Violence Against Women Act was originally enacted in 1994, the law has a strong track record of success, and the annual incidence of domestic violence has dropped more than 50%.

However, it is necessary that the law is both strengthened and reauthorized, which was made clear by the CDC’s 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey that found that 1 in 4 women have been the victim of severe physical domestic violence, and 1 in 5 women have been raped in their lifetime. The reauthorization legislation makes important, overdue

improvements that reflect effective “best practices,” including a new focus on sexual assault prevention and services, tools to prevent domestic violence-related homicides, new rules extending the authority of tribal courts over domestic violence matters involving Native American victims, an increased number of U Visas (for abused undocumented women who cooperate with law enforcement), expanded protections for victims in federal housing programs, and expanded services for traditionally underserved communities.

“The original passage of the Violence Against Women Act was a huge step forward for American women and a bipartisan victory,” said Congresswoman Matsui. “Still, more work remains, and I urge my colleagues on both side of the aisle to join me in working to make progress to protect women and children by passing this bill.”

The law was reauthorized in 2000 and again in 2005, and must be reauthorized this year.

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