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Matsui Opposes GOP VAWA Reauthorization Bill

Legislation Rolls Back Protections for Immigrant, Native American, and LGBT Domestic Violence Victims

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (D-Sacramento) voted in opposition to H.R. 4970, the House Republican version of the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization. Congresswoman Matsui has advocated for a comprehensive reauthorization of VAWA that strengthens the bill, and was an original cosponsor of [H.R. 4271](#)

However, H.R. 4970 would undermine key protections for many domestic violence victims, particularly immigrant spouses, Native American women, and the LGBT community.

“We should be working to pass the strongest possible reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. The Senate passed by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote a reauthorization of the law that would ensure all victims of domestic and sexual violence are protected, and I urge the House Republican leadership to follow suit,” said Congresswoman Matsui.

The Senate-passed bill to reauthorize VAWA included protections for the LGBT community, which experiences domestic violence at the same rate as the general population. Unfortunately, provisions that would help protect LGBT victims from discrimination when accessing help were not included in the Republican bill.

Additionally, in 2000, the reauthorization of VAWA created the U Visa to encourage immigrant victims of serious crimes to report the incident and to help prosecute the perpetrator. The U Visa program allows law enforcement officials to request up to 10,000 visas each year for immigrant victims of U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents who are helping to prosecute

serious domestic violence crimes. However, the House Republican bill would undermine this program by turning the U visa into a temporary visa for most immigrants, and disallow the vast majority of women with U visas from applying for permanent residency. This will remove an incentive for immigrant victims to report or help prosecute crimes, and could force them to remain in dangerous living situations.

“A victim is a victim – it is wrong to discriminate in providing help to someone based on their race, citizenship or sexual orientation. But, H.R. 4970 does just that,” added Matsui.

More than 300 organizations oppose the H.R. 4970, including the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, Break the Cycle, the National Women’s Law Center, the NAACP, the Human Rights Campaign, and the American Bar Association.

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