



July 24, 2013

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
118 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Marino
410 Cannon Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Wasserman Schultz and Congressman Marino,

The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV), the undersigned state sexual assault coalitions, and the undersigned members of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence (NTF) are pleased to support the "Rape Survivors Child Custody Act." NAESV is the voice in Washington for state coalitions and local programs working to end sexual violence and support survivors. State sexual assault coalitions are their states' leaders on sexual violence policy, intervention and prevention. The NTF is comprised of national, tribal, state, territorial and local organizations, as well as individuals, committed to securing an end to violence against women. Collectively, we share your deep concern for the well-being of survivors who bear children as a result of rape and choose to keep and raise those children. A mother should be able to raise her child free from the fear of having to send that child to visit the person who brutalized her.

We applaud your approach of incentivizing states to pass protective laws that allow survivors to petition to terminate the parental rights of the perpetrator based on clear and convincing evidence. Authorizing new VAWA funds to reward states that pass such laws is an excellent strategy to protect this especially vulnerable group of survivors and support rape crisis centers and domestic violence programs at the same time. With the impacts of sequestration and state and local budget cuts, rape crisis centers and domestic violence programs are desperate for funding to avoid lay-offs and address waiting lists. In fact, a 2012 survey by NAESV found that local programs had laid-off over 100 advocates, left 120 positions vacant, and 60% had a waiting list for basic counseling services.

We look forward to working closely with you and advocating for the swift passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monika Johnson Hostler".

Monika Johnson Hostler
Board President and

National Alliance to End Sexual Violence

1130 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 300 / Washington, DC 20036 / www.endsexualviolence.org

State Sexual Assault Coalitions:

Alaska Network On Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
California Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services
Day One Rhode Island
D.C. Rape Crisis Center
Florida Council Against Sexual Violence
Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Indiana Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence
Kentucky Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs
Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Nebraska Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition
New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault
New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs
New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault
North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Texas Association Against Sexual Assault
Vermont Network Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs
West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information Services
Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

National Organizations:

Asian Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence
Casa de Esperanza: National Latina Network for Healthy Families and Communities
Jewish Women International
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs
National Council of Jewish Women
National Domestic Violence/Dating Violence Hotline
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
Victim Rights Law Center