



National Alliance to  
End Sexual Violence

### **The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2022: A National Priority to Address Sexual Assault**

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), enacted in 1994, recognizes the insidious and pervasive nature of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking and supports comprehensive, effective, and cost-saving responses. VAWA programs, administered by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) at the Department of Justice and at the Department of Health and Human Services, give communities the tools they need to support survivors, hold offenders accountable, and prevent sexual violence.

The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV), representing the 56 state and territorial sexual assault coalitions and more than 1500 local rape crisis centers providing services to sexual assault survivors and working to prevent all sexual violence, is [fully supportive of VAWA reauthorization](#).

VAWA is one of the necessary tools to address the widespread and devastating problem of sexual violence in our nation. According to the [National Intimate Partner Sexual Violence Survey](#).

- One in five women has been the victim of rape or attempted rape.
- Nearly one in two women has experienced some form of sexual violence.
- One in five men has experienced a form of sexual violence other than rape in their lifetime.
- Over 80% of women who were victimized experienced significant short and long-term impacts related to the violence such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), injury (42%) and missed time at work or school (28%).
- Most rape and partner violence is experienced before the age of 24, highlighting the importance of preventing this violence before it occurs.

At the same time, we know that sexual assault services are underfunded and survivors deserve better. According to our 2021 survey of rape crisis centers more than ¾ of local sexual assault programs have seen an **increase** in demand over the past year while 57% reported an overall **decrease** in funding. Half experienced a decrease in staffing due to layoffs, inability to fill positions. Of programs reporting a waiting list, 67% have a waiting list for counseling services, in some cases weeks and months long. Forty-five percent of local sexual assault programs lack a full-time sexual assault therapist on staff. Prevention and outreach activities are the first services to be disrupted in times of reduced funding, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

**VAWA is an essential tool to improve sexual assault services, expand prevention efforts, and meet the needs of survivors.**

With each iteration of VAWA, Congress takes the next step to address the needs of survivors and communities. Local, statewide, and national sexual violence organizations provide expertise and feedback about the ever-changing needs of sexual assault survivors. VAWA must continue to meet the moment of increased visibility and reporting of sexual violence as well as expanding knowledge and data about best practices for prevention. NAESV supports all of the many critical provisions in VAWA reauthorization, we are especially focused on several key provisions.

### **Key Sexual Violence Related Provisions in VAWA:**

- **Improves the Rape Prevention & Education Program:**
  - Increases the authorization of the **Rape Prevention & Education Program (RPE)** to \$100 million (current authorization \$50 million);
  - Adds sexual harassment to its authorized uses; and
  - Adds language requiring the involvement of and funding for involvement of OVW-recognized sexual assault coalitions in RPE planning and implementation.
- Increases the authorization of the **Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP)** to \$100 million (current authorization \$40 million).
- Increases funding and access for culturally specific programs serving communities of color.
- Expands tribal jurisdiction to affirm tribal sovereignty to prosecute additional crimes of sexual violence, trafficking, child abuse and stalking by non-native offenders on their lands. Tribal victims deserve justice.
- Updates the HEARTH Act definition of domestic violence to better address the needs of homeless survivors of sexual assault.
- Includes provisions to increase survivors' access to Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs).
- Expands access to services for underserved survivors including LGBTQI survivors.
- Closes the law enforcement consent loophole to better address sexual misconduct by law enforcement.

## **VAWA saves lives and saves money.**

VAWA funded programs have unquestionably improved the national response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. It's time to reauthorize it!

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