

FY27 Support for Immigrant Survivors of Sexual Assault



National Alliance to
End Sexual Violence

FY27 Request: \$500,000 for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and \$500,000 for the Department of Justice (DOJ) to improve accountability and oversight measures to safeguard protections for survivors.

CRITICAL VICTIM PROTECTIONS

Immigrant survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, human trafficking, and other crimes often face barriers when seeking safety and protection, including threats from abusers and perpetrators that seeking help will result in their deportation. To address these barriers, a bipartisan majority in Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) to **provide survivors with essential protections against deportation to allow them to seek help without fear of abuser retaliation**. Later, Congress established the **T and U visa programs** through the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) to facilitate the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity and to protect victims who come forward, in recognition of the many barriers survivors face in reaching out for help.

These protections, along with our asylum laws, were created so that victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking may **seek paths to safety and security in the United States**. However, recent policy shifts are eroding access to these protections and fueling a climate of fear. These policies and practices do not just undermine survivor protections—they embolden abusers and put lives and communities at risk, and create an immense chilling effect on survivors coming forward to seek help.

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF IMMIGRANT SURVIVORS

To fulfill this goal, we request that funds be utilized to improve oversight and accountability mechanisms, improve efficiencies in the adjudication of these benefits, and ensure that funds are not used to undermine the bipartisan laws Congress created to protect survivors and ensure continued access to these protections without fear.

We urge Congress to provide \$500,000 for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and \$500,000 for the Department of Justice (DOJ) to improve accountability and oversight measures to safeguard protections for survivors. This includes directing the agencies to:

- Maintain and publish annual **data on asylum seekers whose claims are based on a fear of intimate partner violence** in their home country (including approval rates);
- Maintain and publish **data on the number of individuals with pending victim-based benefit requests** who have been subject to enforcement actions (including removal orders).
- Ensure that **no funds are used to apprehend, detain, and remove benefit requesters or beneficiaries of survivor-based relief**, including VAWA self-petitioner classification, T nonimmigrant status, U nonimmigrant status, or Special Immigrant Juvenile classification, which undermines the protective purpose of these programs.
- **Recapture unallocated U visas** to assist in alleviating the significant backlog of over 239,000 primary petitioners and an additional 158,000 family members awaiting U visas by significantly cutting the backlog, helping eligible victims of crime to obtain stabilizing benefits, and facilitating family reunification.

HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?
Contact Terri Poore, Policy Director
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