



## **The SAVE Act (H.R. 4088 and S. 2368) harms immigrant victims by undermining Violence Against Women Act protections**

Immigrant women who are eligible for immigration relief and legal protection from abuse are being swept up as enforcement actions by immigration officials have increased. As a result they are being denied access to our legal system. This increased emphasis on enforcement leads to violations of federal laws by DHS officers, whose enforcement-only focus blinds them to their obligations to implement all federal immigration laws, including those that protect immigrant victims (i.e. VAWA confidentiality).

The SAVE Act puts even more money into enforcing a broken immigration system, without fixing underlying problems, and will continue to deny immigrant women the basic right to access the justice system and police protection from violent crime. When the nation focuses on enforcement by putting money into border control, detention centers, fences, and media campaigns, immigrant victims of crime will be silenced.

Immigration exacerbates a woman's vulnerability to domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, and other crimes.<sup>1</sup> The SAVE Act will make it difficult for immigrant victims of domestic violence and sexual assault to safely report crimes to law enforcement. Our communities' ability to hold abusers, rapists, and traffickers accountable through prosecution will be undermined when non-citizen victims are scared to report crimes or even seek out law enforcement. The SAVE Act's focus on enforcement will enhance a victim's fear and distrust of the legal system while strengthening the hand of crime perpetrators to threaten their victims with deportation if the victim seeks help in the justice system.

As a result of this Act, victims will be trapped in abusive relationships and sexual predators will remain unpunished and free to abuse again; immigrant victims will be afraid to contact law enforcement for help in stopping crimes. Separating immigrants from law enforcement jeopardizes the lives of immigrant women and children, and the safety of every community by undermining the hard won relationships developed over the years by community policing programs.

The SAVE Act stirs up fear and creates an environment in which immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking will be even more vulnerable to abuse.

### **We oppose the SAVE ACT**

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<sup>1</sup> Edna Erez. "Immigration, Culture Conflict and Domestic Violence/Woman Battering," *Crime Prevention and Community Safety: An International Journal* 2:27-36, 2000 in Edna Erez and Carolyn Copps Hartley. "Battered Immigrant Women in the Legal System," *Western Criminology Review* 4(2), 2003, page 156.