June 1, 2012

Dear Senator:

As a diverse coalition of immigration, faith, labor, civil rights, human rights, and community organizations serving and advocating on behalf of immigrant victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, and other forms of violence, we thank you for your continuing efforts to ensure final passage of a bipartisan reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) that furthers the long-standing aims of VAWA to protect victims of violence.

VAWA has a long history of uniting lawmakers with the common purpose of protecting survivors of domestic violence. First enacted in 1994, Congress has reauthorized the law in 2000 and 2005, each time with broad, bipartisan support. Over the years, Congress has consistently recognized the vulnerability of noncitizen victims of violence and has therefore enacted provisions in VAWA that enhance safety for victims and their children and provide important tools for law enforcement to investigate and prosecute crimes.

Two weeks ago, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4970, a VAWA reauthorization bill, by a narrow margin of 222-205. Unfortunately, H.R. 4970 would undermine years of bipartisan progress of advancing protections for immigrant victims. Some of H.R. 4970's provisions would actually make immigrants more vulnerable and could endanger their lives.

With your support, in April the Senate passed its own VAWA reauthorization bill, S. 1925, by a vote of 68-31. Though S. 1925 is not perfect, the purpose of VAWA to ensure the protection and safety of victims of violence would be far better served if a final bill adheres more closely to the bipartisan Senate bill. To accomplish this goal, we also ask that Sections 801, 802, 806, and 814 of H.R. 4970 and Section 1008 of S. 1925 be removed during conference.

Each year VAWA laws and programs support thousands of women, children, and others who fall victim to domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking. As the legislative process moves forward to reconcile the two different VAWA proposals, we urge you to oppose provisions that would eliminate or roll back protections for vulnerable immigrant victims.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Survivors of Torture and Trauma African Services Committee American Civil Liberties Union American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) American Immigration Lawyers Association American Jewish Committee Americans for Immigrant Justice

Amnesty International USA Arkansas Interfaith Alliance ASHA for Women Asian American Institute, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice Asian American Justice Center, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice Asian Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence Boston New Sanctuary Movement Boston University Civil Litigation Program Cardozo Human Rights and Genocide Clinic Casa de Esperanza: National Latino@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities Casa Esperanza Center for Gender and Refugee Studies, Hastings College of the Law Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc. Center for Social Justice, Seton Hall University School of Law CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers Refugee and Immigration Ministries, Disciples Home Mission, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Church World Service, Immigration and Refugee Program Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice Santa Barbara Disciples Home Missions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) **Disciples Justice Action Network** DREAM Activist Virginia Families for Freedom Farmworker Justice Florida Coastal Immigrant Rights Clinic Friends Committee on National Legislation Futures Without Violence Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society Hutto Visitation Program Human Rights Defense Center Human Rights Watch Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota Immigration Center for Women and Children **Immigration Equality Action Fund** Indo-American Center Institute on Domestic Violence in the African-American Community Jesuit Social Research Institute, Loyola University New Orleans Jewish Council for Public Affairs Jewish Women International Legal Momentum Legal Services of New Jersey Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Mai Family Services Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office Mercy Investment Services National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd National Alliance to End Sexual Violence National Asian Pacific Bar Association National Black Justice Coalition National Center for Transgender Equality National Center for Victims of Crime National Coalition Against Domestic Violence National Coalition for LGBT Health National Council of Jewish Women National Council of La Raza National Employment Law Project National Immigrant Justice Center National Immigration Forum National Immigration Law Center National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health National Network to End Domestic Violence National Organization for Women National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault National Resource Center on Domestic Violence NC DREAM Team Northwest Immigrant Rights Project One Love Movement Political Asylum Immigration Representation Project Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network Rural Organizing Project Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. Sisters of Mercy Institute Justice Team Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Justice Team Sojourners South Asian Americans Leading Together South Asian Network Tahirih Justice Center **Texans United for Families** The Episcopal Church The Kansas/Missouri Dream Alliance The National Council of the Churches of Christ of the USA The Reformed Church of Highland Park The Washington Defender Association's Immigration Project The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence The Women of Color Network UC Davis Immigration Law Clinic Union for Reform Judaism

United Church of Christ (Justice & Witness Ministries) United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society United Sikhs United We Dream Who Is My Neighbor? Inc. Women for Reformed Judaism Women Watch Afrika Women's Refugee Commission YWCA USA