Talking Points

# The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021

### National Council of Jewish Women’s Message

National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) believes in the Jewish value of *Kavod Ha Bri’ot*, respect and dignity for all human beings. We are each made in G-d’s image and have a duty to protect and care for our bodies and health, and ensure others can do the same. As such, NCJW has long been committed to ensuring that survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking have access to vital and lifesaving services. Reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act is a critical step toward that effort. The House passed The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 (VAWA, HR1620) — introduced by Reps. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX-), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), and Jerry Nadler (D-NY) — in March 2021. HR 1620 responds to the identified needs of survivors and communities across the country, preventing future violence, enhancing and expanding services for survivors, investing in culturally-specific organizations, and improving survivors’ access to justice. **The Senate must pass a bill substantially similar to HR 1620** **to help end the scourge of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking and provide survivors with the support they need.**

* **HR 1620 is a targeted bill with broad impact.** The measure includes narrow, yet important enhancements to prevent and respond to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking including: maintaining protections for all survivors, supporting communities of color, making investments in sexual assault prevention, ensuring sexual predators who prey on Native women can be held accountable, protecting survivors of domestic violence from intimate partner homicide, and increasing survivors’ access to safe housing and economic stability.
* **Reauthorizing VAWA would provide much-needed improvements:** Every time VAWA has been reauthorized it has been strengthened based on our increased understanding of gender-based violence. HR 1620 reflects the input of survivors and many of the priorities of the domestic and sexual assault movement. The bill takes a holistic approach, addressing the complex realities of survivors’ lives. It maintains established protections, while also addressing persistent gaps. As COVID-19 has increased both the incidence of interpersonal violence and the complexity of serving survivors, now is not the time to roll back important protections or even maintain the status quo.
* **We know VAWA works.** Since 1994 when VAWA was first passed, the rate of domestic violence has decreased 63%. And, VAWA-funded prevention programming has been empirically demonstrated to reduce sexual violence. Further, between 2014 and 2016, VAWA funding provided more than one million victim services for survivors of the four crimes, including almost 2 million shelter nights, 600,000 hotline calls, victim advocacy for almost 300,000 unique individuals, and legal services for almost 100,000 survivors. Every six months in that period, VAWA funding served an average of 112,000 primary survivors and their children. VAWA has transformed America’s response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.