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VT Network Applauds Presidential Signing of Violence Against Women Act

Montpelier, VT – Today, President Barack Obama signed into law the Violence Against Women Act, (VAWA) of 2013. The highly anticipated signing secures needed protections and services for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

The law signed today improves protections for immigrant victims of domestic and sexual violence, ensures services for LGBT survivors, and includes landmark protections for women on tribal lands. The bill also preserves and maintains core funding for life-saving victim services.

“VAWA will insure that all victims of domestic and sexual violence – including students, racial minorities, tribal members, immigrants and members of the LGBT community – will be provided with meaningful support, and that all perpetrators will be held accountable”, said Karen Tronsgard Scott, director of the VT Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

Co-authored by Senator Patrick Leahy and Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID), the Act also provides law enforcement the tools they need to help reduce the backlog of rape kits sitting in police agencies and crime labs throughout the country.

VAWA’s movement from a bill into law is the result of a collaborative effort between survivors, advocates and Congressional champions.

“We want to thank Senator Leahy and his staff for their leadership in the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act,” continued Ms. Tronsgard Scott. “Senator Leahy has been a great champion for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, dating violence and stalking. Passing VAWA will become an important part of his legacy in Congress.”
“We also want to thank Senator Sanders and Congressman Welch for their support for all survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking by voting in favor of VAWA,” said Ms. Tronsgard Scott. “We appreciate their deep understanding of the issues impacting survivors and their willingness to lend their votes to support them.”

The law will strengthen and support domestic and sexual violence programs in Vermont to continue assisting victims and survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking.

In 2012, Vermont domestic and sexual violence programs fielded 7,641 hotline calls, served 1,527 victims of sexual violence and provided services to over 8,778 victims of domestic violence.

With significant and much-needed changes and improvements included in this reauthorization, the law will require coordinated implementation and funding to ensure that it reaches its full potential.

For more information about the Vermont Network call 802-223-1302 or go to our website at www.vtnetwork.org. See us on Facebook at VT Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

As the statewide leader to end domestic and sexual violence, the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, in collaboration with its member programs, is the collective voice for social change on behalf of domestic and sexual violence survivors in Vermont.

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