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CONTACT: Corbett Sionainn
VT Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
802-223-1302 x 114
corbett@vtnetwork.org
www.vtnetwork.org

The Vermont Network Lauds Senate Passage of the Comprehensive VAWA Reauthorization Bill

Late Tuesday, the U.S. Senate passed S.47, a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

The bill, authored by Senators Patrick Leahy and Mike Crapo (R-ID), was passed by a vote of 78 to 22. VAWA had over 60 Senate co-sponsors at the time of the vote, including Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders.

“I am proud of this strong, bipartisan vote for VAWA reauthorization. We are deeply indebted to the women and men around the country who have been working with us, including the many in Vermont who have shared their experiences, insights, and support,” said Senator Patrick Leahy. “They have been steadfast in their commitment to the victims and to our efforts to combat domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual assault, and together we can now finally finish what we started last year.”

“The Violence Against Women Act has been extremely successful in Vermont and across the country. While the incidence of domestic violence has been reduced, too many women and girls are still suffering from domestic violence and sexual abuse. I applaud Sen. Leahy for leading the effort to reauthorize this extremely important law,” said Senator Bernie Sanders.

“We are grateful to Senator Leahy for his leadership in support of victims of domestic and sexual violence in Vermont and across the nation”, said Karen Tronsgard Scott, executive director of the VT Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

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

“S.47 seeks to 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”, continued Ms. Tronsgard Scott.
The bill now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

“Last year the House never voted on the Senate-passed bill, but we have high hopes that it will see quick action this year”, said Ms. Tronsgard Scott. “We know that Congressman Welch is a strong supporter of VAWA and victims of crime and will do all he can to help shepherd the bill through the House.”

The Violence Against Women Act has been the bedrock of the federal government’s response to domestic and sexual violence since 1994. It received bipartisan reauthorization in 2000 and 2005.

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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