

**Testimony for the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
Gwen Moore, Representative of Wisconsin's 4th District
Regarding the Violence Against Women Act (Office on Violence Against Women) and
Victims of Crime Act (Office for Victims of Crime)
U.S. Department of Justice
February 28th, 2017**

Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Serrano, and distinguished members of the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on the importance of investing in Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) programs and the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). I sincerely thank the Subcommittee for its ongoing support for these lifesaving programs. I am the Representative for Wisconsin's 4th congressional district, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to testify before you to urge you to continue to support current and critically needed federal investment in the successful, cost-effective VAWA (**\$568.5 million**) and the release of **\$2.95 billion** from the Crime Victims Fund (CVF) administered by the U.S. Department of Justice in the FY 2018 Budget.

The crimes of domestic and sexual violence are pervasive, insidious, and life-threatening. In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the first-ever National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVIS), which revealed that domestic violence affects more than 12 million people each yearⁱ. Additionally, approximately 15.5 million children are exposed to domestic violence every year.ⁱⁱ The terrifying conclusion of domestic violence is often murder, and every day in the U.S. an average of 3 women are killed by a current or former intimate partner.ⁱⁱⁱ In my home state, 68 lives were lost due to domestic violence in 2016—the highest we've seen since we started counting in 2000. Thankfully, with the support of VAWA funding, my home district of Milwaukee is working to upend the tragic trajectory of needless death by implementing a domestic violence lethality assessment project. In April of 2015, all law

enforcement jurisdictions began administering lethality assessments when responding to intimate partner-related calls for service. By the second quarter, law enforcement had completed almost 400 assessments with domestic violence victims. Of these, 56% were identified as “high-danger” under the Maryland Lethality Assessment Program’s (LAP) protocol. For high danger victims, police officers called Sojourner Family Peace Center’s 24-hour hotline and encouraged the victim to speak with an advocate. Almost, 60% of victims agreed to speak to an advocate. Connecting with an understanding and knowledgeable victim advocate immediately after a violent incident can help to alleviate the feelings of self-doubt and fear that victims report after the arrest of their abusers, which starts survivors on a path toward safety.

According to NISVIS, nearly 3 in 10 women and 1 in 4 men have experienced rape, physical violence, or stalking in his or her lifetime. Nearly 1 in 5 women have been the victim of rape or attempted rape, and nearly 1 in 2 women have experienced some form of sexual violence. Victims of sexual assault are more likely to struggle professionally and academically and suffer from depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, and suicide contemplation. Over 1.8 million individuals in Wisconsin have been raped or sexually assaulted.^{iv} With VAWA funding, Wisconsin rape crisis centers helped over 12,000 survivors in 2015 alone. A recent study found that when sexual assault victims have the support of an advocate in the aftermath of an assault, they receive more helpful information, referrals, and services; and they experience less secondary trauma or revictimization by medical and legal systems. They also fare better in the short and long term and are more likely to file a police report than those without such support.^v

Our nation has made such phenomenal progress in understanding and addressing violence against women because of the **prudent, national, ongoing, annual investment**. With the

passage of VAWA, the infusion of federal funds fostered unprecedented coordination between frontline stakeholders responding to domestic violence and sexual assault crises – police officers, victim service providers, prosecutors, judges, and the criminal and civil justice systems. In individual communities, VAWA-driven coordination urged professionals out of their siloes to a common table, centering the shared goal of protecting survivors and reducing perpetration, to give them the tools to transform their responses. VAWA’s national scope ensures that successes in individual communities continue to be replicated across the country. VAWA has elevated a national learning community that fosters innovation and promotes best practices. Additionally, federal VAWA funds encourage States to leverage local and state resources in the effort to end these pervasive crimes.

VAWA’s work is complemented by VOCA, which funds direct services to victims of all types of crime, including domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. Together, VAWA and VOCA have fueled our undeniable national progress towards addressing violence against women. VAWA saved an estimated \$12.6 billion in net-averted costs in its first 6 years alone.^{vi} Reporting of domestic violence has increased as much as 51%.^{vii} The rate of non-fatal intimate partner violence against women has decreased by 63%^{viii} and the number of women killed by an intimate partner has decreased by 23%.^{ix} A 2010 study demonstrated that an increase in the number of legal services available is associated with a decrease in intimate partner homicide.^x Another study found that VAWA funds, particularly ones supporting law enforcement, were associated with a reduction in rape and aggravated assault.^{xi}

Funding cuts would erode our nation’s progress on this critical issue. The National Network to End Domestic Violence’s *Domestic Violence Counts* (the Census), a 24-hour national snapshot of domestic violence services, revealed that in just one day, 72,959 victims of

domestic violence received services; over 11,991 requests for services went unmet due to lack of funding and resources. According to a survey by the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, more than 1/3 (39%) of the nation's 1,300 rape crisis centers have a waiting list for critical services while over 40% have faced a reduction in staffing over the past year. For those individuals who are not able to find safety, the consequences can be dire, including homelessness or continued exposure to life-threatening violence. In addition to the terrible cost to individual victims and families, these crimes cost taxpayers and communities. According to the Centers for Disease Control, based on 1999 figures, the cost of intimate partner violence exceeds \$5.8 billion each year, \$4.1 billion of which is for direct health care services.^{xii} Translating this into 2016 dollars, the annual cost to the nation is over \$9 billion. In addition, domestic violence costs U.S. employers an estimated \$3 to \$13 billion annually.^{xiii} Without funding, law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges would not have the training and tools they need to ensure victim safety and to hold perpetrators accountable. Over 20 years of progress, learning and investment is threatened by funding reduction.

We know that when a coordinated response is developed and immediate, essential services are available, victims can escape from life-threatening violence and begin to rebuild their lives. To address unmet needs and build upon their successes, VAWA programs and the VOCA fund release should reflect the needs of victims. The progress and promise of these bills can only be fulfilled if the programs receive continued significant investment. I urge you to support **full funding** for all VAWA programs as you work on the FY 2018 CJS bill. Additional VOCA funds are critically needed to respond to the crisis caused by the dangerous lack of available services for victims of domestic and sexual violence. I also urge you to establish a federal funding stream from VOCA for Native American tribes.

These programs work together to prevent and end domestic and sexual violence. We need to maintain our investment to build upon our successes and bring our progress to scale. Our federal resources create vital, cost-effective programs that help break the cycle of violence, reduce related social ills, which will save our nation money now and in the future.

ⁱ National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Nation Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence survey, available at https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf

ⁱⁱ McDonald, R., et al. (2006). "Estimating the Number of American Children Living in Partner-Violence Families." *Journal of Family Psychology*, 30(1), 137-142.

ⁱⁱⁱ Bureau of Justice Statistics (2013). Intimate Partner Violence: Attributes of Victimization, 1993-2011 (Special Report NCJ243300)

^{iv} These are prevalence estimates using randomized, anonymous telephone surveys. Respondents did not necessarily report the crime to law enforcement. National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 Summary Report. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2011. http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf

^v (Campbell, R. (2006). Rape survivors' experiences with the legal and medical system: Do rape victim advocates make a difference? *Violence Against Women*, 12, 30-45.

^{vi} Kathryn Andersen Clark et al., A Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, 8 *Violence Against Women* 417 (2002).

^{vii} Intimate Partner Violence in the U.S." U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Jan. 2008.; Cassandra Archer et al., Institute for Law and Justice, National Evaluation of the Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies Program 14 (Nov. 2002).

^{viii} (Truman, J.L. & Morgan, R.E. (2014, April.) Nonfatal Domestic Violence (2003-2012). U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: Bureaus of Justice Statistics, available at, <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ipvav9311.pdf>. (see page 3)

^{ix} (Catalano (2013, Nov.)) Intimate Partner Violence in the U.S Attributes of Victimization, 1993–2011. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs: Bureaus of Justice Statistics. Nov 2013 <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ipvav9311.pdf> (see Table 2 comparison of 1993 and 2010 numbers)

^x Reckdenwald, A., & Parker, K.K. (2010). Understanding gender-specific intimate partner homicide: A theoretical and domestic service-oriented approach. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38, 951-958.

^{xi} Rachel Lilley, A Nationwide Assessment of Effects on Rape and Assault, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1077801208329146?journalCode=vawa>

^{xii} National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. *Costs of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States*. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2003.

^{xiii} Bureau of National Affairs Special Rep. No. 32, Violence and Stress: The Work/Family Connection 2 (1990); Joan Zorza, *Women Battering: High Costs and the State of the Law*, Clearinghouse Rev., Vol. 28, No. 4, 383, 385.