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***THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT PASSES THE US SENATE AND HOUSE***

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Due to the strong leadership of Senators Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Joseph Biden (D-DE), the Senate yesterday evening approved the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) by unanimous consent. The Senate's passage follows the House's approval late last week.

Diane Wolff, Interim Executive Director of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV) stated, "The groundswell of support in both the House and Senate shows that the nation's leaders recognize the importance of continuing and strengthening services that support victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. We thank all Wisconsin members of the US Congress for fulfilling their promise to reauthorize and strengthen VAWA. The passage in the House and Senate is a great victory for all victims and their children."

Linda Morrison, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Inc. (WCASA) added, "This landmark legislation is critical to the victims and survivors of violent crime. The strong bipartisan support for VAWA 2005 displays that as a nation we are committed to ending violence against women and children."

Now that VAWA has passed in the House and Senate, the two chambers will meet to work out differences in their respective pieces of legislation. Most notably, the House version only contains criminal and civil justice provisions, while the Senate bill contains more comprehensive provisions addressing prevention, crisis and advocacy services, and housing protections.

"Victims in Wisconsin, and throughout the nation, are counting on the members of the US Congress to put forward a strong and comprehensive VAWA that reduces as many barriers to safety as possible," said Wolff. "We know that VAWA has had a significant impact on services and supports to victims in Wisconsin already. We know a strong VAWA will continue to truly make a difference in the lives of victims."

Morrison stated, "Direct services have a profound impact on survivors of violent crime and their ability to recover from traumatic events. It is our hope that Congress will acknowledge this dire need by fully funding the programs and services as proposed in the original 2005 VAWA legislation. We strongly encourage Congress to also recognize the needs of traditionally underserved populations and include specific funding for programs and services that reach out to marginalized communities. Wisconsinites, like all Americans, will benefit from a strong – and strongly funded – Violence Against Women Act."

***Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence***

*The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV) is the statewide membership and social change organization representing local Wisconsin domestic abuse programs, victims of domestic violence and their children, and citizens concerned with ending violence against women. For more information about WCADV and its initiatives, visit our website at [www.wcadv.org](http://www.wcadv.org).*

***Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Inc.***

*The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Inc. (WCASA) promotes the social change needed to end sexual violence in Wisconsin. Our mission is to support a statewide network of concerned individuals and organizations as they work toward this goal. For more information about WCASA, visit our website at [www.wcasa.org](http://www.wcasa.org).*