

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**
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**THE NSVRC PROCLAIMS:
"VAWA REAUTHORIZATION IS GOOD FOR THE NATION"**

Enola, PA - The 1994 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) promoted new approaches and funding to combat the many forms of violence against women. For example, the STOP grant provisions of VAWA provide states, tribal governments and localities opportunities such as building victim services, training and expanding law enforcement and prosecution personnel to combat violence against women and improving methods of data collection.

While sexual assault and domestic violence affect both women and men, they are primarily crimes against women. A Department of Justice survey released in July 2000 found that women continue to be at greatest risk for intimate partner violence. A recent Bureau of Justice Statistics report on criminal victimization, indicated that women are 7.5 times more likely to be victims of sexual assaults and rapes than men.

According to Delilah Rumburg, member of the National Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women and executive director of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, "Before VAWA funding came into existence in 1994, a general lack of awareness existed regarding the extent and seriousness of violence against women. This funding has been, and continues to be, vital to our work and sustains us in our efforts to address this complex social problem head-on and to develop the needed approaches that lead to interventions which prevent and treat women impacted by the violence in their lives."

According to Karen Baker, NSVRC Project Director, "if VAWA is not reauthorized, local centers and state coalitions across the nation will be adversely affected, and in turn, much of their recent accomplishments may unravel. The support VAWA provides in the struggle to end violence against women makes a difference, and sends a clear message that it should not be tolerated."

The NSVRC recognizes that violence against women carries significant social and economic costs. In fact, it has been estimated that the annual cost of sexual violence is a staggering \$127 billion. A 1997 BJS report on violence-related injuries (Rand) indicated that over 50% of abused women lost at least three days of work monthly due to abuse. A study of the effects of battering on women's employment (Shepard & Pence) reported that 70% of surveyed women had difficulty in performing their job because of abuse.

Karen Baker explains, that "the renewal of VAWA is an important way to promote a safer and healthier society for everyone. The crimes of sexual assault and domestic violence are not family matters but costly social crimes."