

CONTACT: Danny Hajjar
dhajjar@mrss.com, 202-478-6182

STATEMENT ON NEW LEGISLATION TO REAUTHORIZE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

The Tahirih Justice Center applauds Representative Bass (D-CA) and Representative Fitzpatrick (R-PA) for introducing a bipartisan bill in the House to reauthorize the critical Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). This important recommitment to ending gender-based violence comes during Women's History Month, a day before International Women's Day, and just in time for today's hearing on the need to reauthorize VAWA held by the House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security. Tahirih submitted [written testimony](#) in support of reauthorization.

"With the introduction of this bill, Congress has the opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to survivors' safety and press for a robust reauthorization of VAWA," said Archi Pyati, Chief of Policy at Tahirih. "This law is a cornerstone of our nation's response to the epidemic of violence against women in the modern era, and it is critical that it is reauthorized with bipartisan support."

VAWA provides critical tools to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and helps survivors rebuild their lives while holding perpetrators accountable. When it was first enacted in 1994, Congress recognized that immigrant survivors of violence face unique vulnerabilities to violence and barriers to accessing safety. As a result, VAWA contains provisions allowing immigrant victims to obtain status, taking a powerful tool of control out of the hands of their abusers.

VAWA requires renewal every five years, and knowing that it would expire in September 2018, advocates began working with members of Congress on reauthorization in 2017 to improve its provisions and ensure its passage. Unfortunately, Congress failed to reauthorize VAWA in time.

"We have reached a collective awareness in this era of #MeToo that anyone can be a victim of sexual assault and domestic abuse," added Pyati. "VAWA must be reauthorized now to ensure all survivors, including immigrant survivors, have access to the life-saving protections it provides. This bipartisan bill should garner plenty of support and send a clear message that the nation stands with survivors."

The Tahirih Justice Center has additional resources on VAWA, including:

- A [fact sheet](#) which contains information about the protections and services VAWA provides to survivors of violence
- A [compilation of stories](#) from clients of Tahirih who have received legal protection through VAWA

Archi Pyati is available for comment on this topic. Please contact dhajjar@mrss.com to arrange an interview.

About the Tahirih Justice Center

The Tahirih Justice Center is the largest national direct service and policy advocacy organization focused on assisting immigrant women and girls fleeing violence. The organization has five offices across the country and is headquartered in the Washington DC area. Tahirih monitors policy shifts that impact women and girls fleeing violence and advocate for the United States to honor its legal obligations to protect those fleeing human rights abuses.

Tahirih Justice Center is a national non-profit that protects courageous immigrant women and girls who refuse to be victims of violence through free legal and social services, public policy advocacy, and training and education. Visit www.tahirih.org for more information.