



NEW YORK  
CITY BAR

July 2, 2014

VIA FAX

Hon. Peter King  
U.S. House of Representatives  
339 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative King:

I write on behalf of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York (the Association) to urge you to cosponsor the International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA) that was introduced in the House of Representatives on November 21, 2013 (H.R. 3571).

The Association has a membership of more than 24,000 members in over 50 countries. Founded in 1870, the Association has a long history of dedication to human rights and women's rights. The Association's Committee on African Affairs monitors and responds to legal and policy developments in Africa. The Committee on Sex and Law addresses issues relating to the effect of gender in the formulation and operation of law and social policy. The Committee on Domestic Violence engages in policy and legal analysis on issues relating to domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence. These Committees urge your support of I-VAWA.

The I-VAWA of 2013 was introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Janice Schakowsky and referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.<sup>1</sup> The I-VAWA of 2012 was introduced in the House of Representatives on June 7, 2012 by Representatives Janice Schakowsky, Nita Lowey and Howard Berman, where it was referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs,<sup>2</sup> but no further action was taken on it, and no similar bill was introduced in the Senate in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. Previously the I-VAWA of 2010 was introduced in the House and the Senate during the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress Senate<sup>3</sup> and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted to report the bill to the full Senate.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> H.R. 3571: International Violence Against Women Act of 2013, available at <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr3571>.

<sup>2</sup> Bill Summary & Status, 112<sup>th</sup> Cong. (2011-12); H.R. 5905, available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas> (search HR 5905); H.R. 5905: To combat international violence against women and girls, Bill overview, available at <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/hr5905>.

<sup>3</sup> International Violence Against Women Act of 2010, S.2982 (H.R.4594), available at <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/111/s2982>.

On December 21, 2010 the bill was placed on the Senate Legislative Calendar,<sup>4</sup> but the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress ended before any further action was taken.<sup>5</sup>

The I-VAWA is legislation designed to prevent and respond to the widespread and egregious violence against girls and women that afflicts communities and countries across the globe---domestic violence, rape, acid burnings, so-called honor killings, trafficking of young girls,<sup>6</sup> forced marriage, abduction of children and other gross violations of human rights. Millions of women and girls worldwide are physically, sexually or otherwise abused at some point in their lifetimes, with rates reaching up to 71% in some countries.<sup>7</sup> Nearly 50% of all sexual assaults worldwide are against adolescent girls aged 15 years or younger.<sup>8</sup> Women and girls in emergencies, conflict settings, and natural disasters often face extreme violence, including being forced to exchange sex for food.<sup>9</sup> One in three women worldwide will be beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime.<sup>10</sup>

I-VAWA addresses these issues. The proposed law would:

- Codify in law the existing Office of Global Women's Issues within the State Department and the Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues. The Ambassador would have authority to direct programs and funding relating to gender equality and the advancement of women and girls internationally for all bureaus in the Department of State and in the international programs of all federal agencies;<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Women Thrive Worldwide, *The International Violence Against Women Act of 2010 (IVAWA)*, available at [http://www.women thrive.org/index.php?option=com\\_issues&view=issue&id=5&Itemid=115](http://www.women thrive.org/index.php?option=com_issues&view=issue&id=5&Itemid=115)<sup>6</sup> Bill Summary & Status, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong. (2009-10), S.2982, available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas>.

<sup>5</sup> *Supra* note 4.

<sup>6</sup> Trafficking in Persons Report, Victims' Stories, June 2014, available at <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2014>.

<sup>7</sup> Geneva World Health Organization, *Summary Report-WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women: Initial Results on Prevalence, Health Outcomes and Women's Responses* at 5 (2005), available at [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2005/9241593512\\_eng.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2005/9241593512_eng.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Lisa Shechtman, *School Safety: Protecting Girls from Violence and HIV/Aids* at 11, GIRLS AND HIV - A New Epidemic in the Women of Tomorrow?(Jan-Feb 2007), available at [http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/globalhealthcouncil\\_Aidslink101.pdf](http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/globalhealthcouncil_Aidslink101.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Driven by Desperation: Transactional Sex as a Survival Strategy in Port-au-Prince IDP Camps*. At 5 (May 2011), available at <http://www.unhcrwashington.org/atf/cf/%7Bc07eda5e-ac71-4340-8570-194d98bdc139%7D/SGBV-HAITI-STUDY-MAY2011.PDF>; Women's Refugee Commission, *Executive Summary: Working Women at Risk: The Links Between Making a Living and Sexual Violence for Refugees in Ethiopia* (Feb.2009), available at [http://womensrefugeecommission.org/resources/doc\\_download/278-working-women-at-risk-the-links-between-making-a-living-and-sexual-violence-for-refugees-in-ethiopia.pdf](http://womensrefugeecommission.org/resources/doc_download/278-working-women-at-risk-the-links-between-making-a-living-and-sexual-violence-for-refugees-in-ethiopia.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Lori Heise, Mary Ellsberg & Megan Gottemoeller, *Population Reports - Ending Violence against Women*, . Series L, No. 11, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Dec. 1999), available at <http://archive.k4health.org/system/files/L%2011.pdf>. See also UNIFEM, *Not a Minute More: Ending Violence Against Women* at 8( 2003), available at [http://unifem.org/attachments/products/312\\_book\\_complete\\_eng.pdf](http://unifem.org/attachments/products/312_book_complete_eng.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Section 101. of H.R. 3571 available at <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr3571> Office of Global Women's Issues. President Obama appointed Melanne Verveer as Ambassador-at-Large for Global for Women's Issues on April 6, 2009. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs Biographies, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/122075.htm>. Honorable Catherine Russell is the present Ambassador. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs Biographies, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/122075.htm>.

- Establish a Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), who would enlist or use USAID’s resources for such equality and empowerment;<sup>12</sup>
- Mandate the establishment of a U.S. global strategy to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls that would integrate gender analysis into the strategy for each country;<sup>13</sup> and
- Authorize the State Department and USAID to provide assistance to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls internationally, requiring at least 10% of foreign aid to a country to be allocated to community-based nongovernmental organizations, with priority to those led by women.<sup>14</sup>

Since this legislation is aimed at coordinating and integrating existing programs, it should not require the appropriation of additional funding.<sup>15</sup> Passage of the I-VAWA would be consistent with our nation’s international and regional human rights obligations. The United States adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)<sup>16</sup> and ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),<sup>17</sup> both of which support women’s rights. The UDHR states that rights belong equally to all people “without distinction of any kind such . . .sex . . . or any other status,”<sup>18</sup> and the ICCPR includes a similar provision.<sup>19</sup> The United States is also a member of the Organization of American States and bound by the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, which has been used to advance the rights of victims of gender-based violence in the Americas.<sup>20</sup>

Most Americans are horrified by the violence against women and girls. In a poll, three in five American voters said that addressing global violence against women and girls should be one of the top priorities for our government.<sup>21</sup> Four in five said they support the I-VAWA.<sup>22</sup> It is groundbreaking legislation that offers solutions.

<sup>12</sup> Section 102. of H.R. 3571 available at <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr3571>.

<sup>13</sup> Section 111. of H.R. 3571 available at <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr3571>.

<sup>14</sup> Section 112. of H.R. 3571 available at <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr3571>.

<sup>15</sup> See Coalition to End Violence Against Women and Girls Globally, *Combating Violence and Discrimination Against Women: A Global Call to Action*, Hearing of Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on International Operations and Organizations, Human Rights, Democracy and Global Women’s Issues, June 24, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> See Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), available at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/> and <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/udhr/>.

<sup>17</sup> See *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*, available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm>. The ICCPR was Ratified by the United States in 1992 with five reservations.

<sup>18</sup> Article 2 of the UDHR.

<sup>19</sup> Article 2.1 of the ICCPR.

<sup>20</sup> See American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, available at <http://www.cidh.oas.org/Basicos/English/Basic2.american%20Declaration.htm>. See also Jessica Lenahan (Gonzales) v. United States, Case 12.626, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Report No. 80/11, available at [www.oas.org/en/iachr/decisions/2011/USPU12626EN.doc](http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/decisions/2011/USPU12626EN.doc).

<sup>21</sup> Lake Research Partners, *Key Research Findings* at 2 (Aug.2009), available at [9-09.pdf](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/GlobalPrevention/Lake_Intl_Research_Key_Findings_9-09.pdf). [http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/GlobalPrevention/Lake\\_Intl\\_Research\\_Key\\_Findings\\_9-09.pdf](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/GlobalPrevention/Lake_Intl_Research_Key_Findings_9-09.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*

The I-VAWA is an investment in a future where violence and abuse are no longer perpetrated against women and girls. For the foregoing reasons, the Association urges you to cosponsor the International Violence Against Women Act.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debra L. Raskin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Debra" being the most prominent part.

Debra L. Raskin  
President

NEW YORK  
CITY BAR

July 2, 2014

VIA FAX

Hon. Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-3205

Dear Senator Schumer:

I write on behalf of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York (the Association) to urge you to cosponsor the International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA) that was introduced in the Senate on May 8, 2014 (S.2307).

The Association has a membership of more than 24,000 members in over 50 countries. Founded in 1870, the Association has a long history of dedication to human rights and women's rights. The Association's Committee on African Affairs monitors and responds to legal and policy developments in Africa. The Committee on Sex and Law addresses issues relating to the effect of gender in the formulation and operation of law and social policy. The Committee on Domestic Violence engages in policy and legal analysis on issues relating to domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence. These Committees urge your support of I-VAWA.

The I-VAWA of 2014 was introduced in the Senate by Senators Boxer, Menendez, Collins, Kirk and Shaheen and referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.<sup>1</sup> The bill was previously introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Schakowsky on November 21, 2013, and referred to the House Committee on Foreign Relations.<sup>2</sup> The I-VAWA of 2012 was introduced in the House of Representatives on June 7, 2012 by Representatives Janice Schakowsky, Nita Lowey and Howard Berman, where it was referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs,<sup>3</sup> but no further action was taken on it, and no similar bill was introduced in the Senate in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. Previously the I-VAWA of 2010 was introduced in the House and the Senate during the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress<sup>4</sup> and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted to report the bill to the full Senate.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S.2307: International Violence Against Women Act of 2014, available at <http://www.govt.us/congress/bills/113/S2307>.

<sup>2</sup> H.R. 3571: International Violence Against Women Act of 2013, available at <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr3571>.

<sup>3</sup> Bill Summary & Status, 112<sup>th</sup> Cong. (2011-12); H.R. 5905, available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas> (search HR 5905); H. R. 5905: To combat international violence against women and girls, Bill overview, available at <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/hr5905>.

<sup>4</sup> International Violence Against Women Act of 2010, S.2982 (H.R.4594), available at <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/111/s2982>.

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I-VAWA addresses these issues. The proposed law would:

- Codify in law the existing Office of Global Women's Issues within the State Department and the Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues. The Ambassador would have authority to direct programs and funding relating to gender equality and the advancement of women and girls internationally for all bureaus in the Department of State and in the international programs of all federal agencies;<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Trafficking in Persons Report, Victims' Stories, June 2014, available at <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2014>.

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<sup>10</sup> Lisa Shechtman, *School Safety: Protecting Girls from Violence and HIV/Aids* at 11, GIRLS AND HIV - A New Epidemic in the Women of Tomorrow?(Jan-Feb 2007), available at [http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/globalhealthcouncil\\_Aidslink101.pdf](http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/globalhealthcouncil_Aidslink101.pdf).

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<sup>12</sup> Lori Heise, Mary Ellsberg & Megan Gottemoeller, *Population Reports - Ending Violence against Women*, . Series L, No. 11, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Dec. 1999), available at <http://archive.k4health.org/system/files/L%2011.pdf>. See also UNIFEM, *Not a Minute More: Ending Violence Against Women* at 8( 2003), available at [http://unifem.org/attachments/products/312\\_book\\_complete\\_eng.pdf](http://unifem.org/attachments/products/312_book_complete_eng.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Section 101. of S. 2307 available at <https://www.govtrackus/congress/bills/113/s2307/text>. Office of Global Women's Issues. President Obama appointed Melanne Verveer as Ambassador-at-Large for Global for Women's Issues on April 6, 2009. Hon. Catherine Russell is the present Ambassador. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs Biographies, available at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/122075.htm>.

- Establish a Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), who would enlist or use USAID’s resources for such equality and empowerment;<sup>14</sup>
- Mandate the establishment of a U.S. global strategy to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls that would integrate gender analysis into the strategy for each country;<sup>15</sup> and
- Authorize the State Department and USAID to provide assistance to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls internationally, requiring at least 10% of foreign aid to a country to be allocated to community-based nongovernmental organizations, with priority to those led by women.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Section 102. of S. 2307 available at <https://www.govtrackus/congress/bills/113/s2307/text>.

<sup>15</sup> Section 111. of S. 2307 available at <https://www.govtrackus/congress/bills/113/s2307/text>.

<sup>16</sup> Section 112. of S.2307 available at <https://www.govtrackus/congress/bills/113/s2307/text>.

<sup>17</sup> See Coalition to End Violence Against Women and Girls Globally, *Combating Violence and Discrimination Against Women: A Global Call to Action*, Hearing of Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on International Operations and Organizations, Human Rights, Democracy and Global Women’s Issues, June 24, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> See Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), available at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/> and <http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/udhr/>.

<sup>19</sup> See *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*, available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm>. The ICCPR was Ratified by the United States in 1992 with five reservations.

<sup>20</sup> Article 2 of the UDHR.

<sup>21</sup> Article 2.1 of the ICCPR.

<sup>22</sup> See American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, available at <http://www.cidh.oas.org/Basicos/English/Basic2.american%20Declaration.htm>. See also *Jessica Lenahan (Gonzales) v. United States*, Case 12.626, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Report No. 80/11, available at [www.oas.org/en/iachr/decisions/2011/USPU12626EN.doc](http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/decisions/2011/USPU12626EN.doc).

<sup>23</sup> Lake Research Partners, *Key Research Findings at 2* (Aug.2009), available at <http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/GlobalPrevention/Lake Intl Research Key Findings.>

<sup>24</sup> *Id.*

The I-VAWA is an investment in a future where violence and abuse are no longer perpetrated against women and girls. For the foregoing reasons, the Association urges you to cosponsor the International Violence Against Women Act.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debra L. Raskin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Debra" being more prominent than the last name "Raskin".

Debra L. Raskin  
President

cc: The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senate  
478 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-3205  
Via Fax