



Formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund

May 4, 2012

Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
2138 Rayburn
Washington, DC 20515

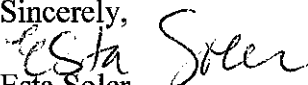
Honorable John Conyers
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
B-351 Rayburn
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Conyers,

On behalf of Futures Without Violence, a national non-profit advocacy organization with more than 30 years of experience working to end violence against women and children, we would like to express our strong opposition to H.R. 4970, the bill recently introduced by Rep. Sandy Adams (R-FL) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. As you know it is due to be marked up next week in the House Judiciary Committee. While we respect Congresswoman Adams' personal commitment to the issue of violence against women and girls, we fear that this legislation would do great harm to victims of violence and roll back years of progress we have made in protecting women and children who are victims of abuse. The bill is genuinely dangerous in terms of its impact on immigrant women and their families. It includes damaging provisions that create obstacles for immigrant victims wanting to report crimes, increases danger for immigrant victims by eliminating important confidentiality protections, and undermines effective anti-fraud protections already built into the legislation.

Also troubling is that the bill, while embracing many elements of the bipartisan reauthorization that recently passed the Senate, excludes key improvements that were added to the Senate reauthorization. It expressly rejects protections for men and women who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, and eliminates strong protections and justice for women and children who are beaten or abused on Tribal lands by perpetrators who are not members of a particular tribe. Because of these omissions and the inclusion of truly harmful and likely dangerous additions, we are forced to oppose this bill. We respectfully request that you reconsider advancing this legislation and instead focus on developing a bipartisan bill modeled after H.R. 4271, the companion bill to the Senate-passed version of VAWA.

Thank you for your past efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women and children. We look forward to working with your offices to craft a bill that works to protect all victims and directs resources to this urgent task in the most effective ways possible.

Sincerely,

Esta Soler
President and Founder