United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 16, 2012

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner:

A commitment to saving the lives of women and victims of domestic violence should be above politics. Since being enacted in 1994, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) has developed a long track record of protecting women and reducing the incidence of domestic violence by providing critical support to law enforcement and services for victims. In order to further combat domestic violence and sexual assault, we urge you to give an up-or-down vote to the Senate's bipartisan VAWA Reauthorization Act.

We should not let politics pick and choose which victims of abuse to help and which to ignore. Each previous reauthorization substantially improved the way VAWA addressed the changing needs of domestic violence victims by addressing challenges facing older victims, victims with disabilities, and other underserved groups. The Senate's bipartisan VAWA Reauthorization Act continues this tradition by placing greater emphasis on training for law enforcement and forensic response to sexual assault, and by strengthening protections for all victims regardless of where they live, or their race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation.

Throughout its history, VAWA has been a bipartisan solution to an urgent national challenge. That's why its reauthorization is endorsed by over 500 state and local organizations and 47 attorneys general. It was enacted with broad bipartisan support, has been reauthorized twice with unanimous Senate approval, and last month the Senate passed its reauthorization on a strong bipartisan vote. We urge you to honor VAWA's bipartisan history and affirm the House's commitment to combating domestic violence by passing the Senate's VAWA Reauthorization Act.

Sincerely,

Patty Murray

Barbara A. Mikulski

Diane McCaskill

Jeanne Shaheen

Dianne Feinstein

Maria Cantwell

Amy Klobuchar

Kay R. Hagan

Mary L. Landrieu

Barbara Boxer

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Jeanne Shaheen