

By Mr. BIDEN (for himself, Mr. **HATCH**, Mr. **SPECTER**, Mr.

S. 1197. A bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to announce today the introduction of the Biden/Hatch/Specter Violence Against Women Act of 2005. Many in this chamber are well aware that I consider the Violence Against Women Act the single most significant legislation that I've crafted during my 32-year tenure in the Senate. This law is my baby, so to speak, and I take very seriously my responsibilities to ensure that it is adequately funded and renewed. What was once an infant statute seeking legitimacy in the public eye and in the halls of government is now a feisty ten-year law that has made its presence known from Long Beach, CA to Dover, DE. But in September 2005, the Act will expire. Congress and the President must act quickly in the next three months to renew the backbone of our country's fight to end domestic violence and sexual assault, the Violence Against Women Act. We simply cannot let the Act lapse or become buried in partisan bickering.

The enactment of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994 was the beginning of a national and historic commitment to women and children victimized by domestic violence and sexual assault. Thus far, our commitment has yielded extraordinary progress. Since the Act's passage, domestic violence has dropped by almost 50 percent. Incidents of rape are down by 60 percent. The number of women killed by an abusive husband or boyfriend is down by 22 percent. More than half of all rape victims are stepping forward to report the crime. Over a million women have found justice in our courtrooms and obtained domestic violence protective orders.

The Violence Against Women Act provides critical resources so that our communities may implement big and small improvements that can make all the difference in the world. For instance, in my home State of Delaware,

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the Act's rural grant program helped the Delaware State Police establish fully-equipped, dedicated domestic violence units in two counties. The STOP program provided a Hispanic shelter with funding to purchase a van to pick up battered women and their children who have nowhere else to turn.

Today, we uphold our commitment to America's families. Despite the incredible strides made, far too many women remain afraid to go home or afraid to tell anyone about the rape that happened at last night's party. We cannot let the Violence Against Women Act become a victim of its own success. Instead, we need to usher the Act into the 21st century and implement it with the next generation--recent police academy graduates who want to be trained on handling family violence, newly elected State legislators who want to update State laws on sexual assault, and the next generation of children who must be taught that abuse will not be tolerated.

Today's achievement--introduction of a bipartisan, compromise bill that both reinvigorates existing programs and creates bold initiatives to tackle new issues--has been a year in the making. As I drafted this next iteration of the Violence Against Women Act, I listened closely to the recommendations of those on the front lines to end

the violence--police, emergency room nurses, victim advocates, shelter directors, and prosecutors--and made targeted improvements to existing grant programs and tightened up criminal laws. A wide variety of groups worked hard with Senator **SPECTER**, Senator **HATCH** and I to create this bill, including the

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the Family Violence Prevention Fund, Legal Momentum, the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, the National Center for Victims of Crime, the American Bar Association, the National District Attorneys Association, the National Council on Family and Juvenile Court Judges, the National Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association and many others.

Before previewing the particulars of today's bill, I want to explain a few of my principles guiding the drafting of the Violence Against Women Act of 2005. First, I remain dedicated to the cornerstone programs in the Act such as the STOP grant program, the Rural Grant program and the National Domestic Violence Hotline. These are enormously successful initiatives that are the scaffolding of the Act. These foundations must be strengthened, not neglected.

Second, ending domestic violence and sexual assault has, and will continue to cost money. This is simply not a goal that can be accomplished on the cheap. Our success in ending family violence is not a signal to reduce funding; rather the opposite is so. We can't afford to lose the gains that we have made. We've found a winning combination, and Congress should continue to spend its money so effectively.

Third, today's bill is an ambitious, but reasoned, effort to solve the next level of challenges for battered women and their children. We've made tremendous strides in treating domestic violence and sexual assaults as public crimes with accountable offenders and creating coordinated community responses to help victims. Our next task is to look beyond the immediate crisis and provide long-term solutions for victims, as well as redouble our prevention efforts. Therefore, this bill includes important efforts to ease the housing crisis for victims fleeing their homes, provide more economic security for victims by preserving their employment stability, engage boys and men in initiatives to prevent domestic violence from occurring in the first place, and enlist the healthcare community in identifying and treating victims.

My final principle is that ending violence against women is truly a shared goal--one that is held by Democrats and Republicans, one that is upheld by men and women, and one that is desired by both government and by the private sector. The continued success of the Violence Against Women Act depends upon bipartisanship commitment.

Today's bill includes the following components. Title I on the criminal justice system includes provisions to: 1. Renew and increase funding to over \$400 million a year for existing fundamental grant programs for law enforcement, lawyers, judges and advocates; 2. stiffen existing criminal penalties for repeat Federal domestic violence offenders; and 3. update the criminal law on stalking to incorporate new surveillance technology like Global Positioning Systems (GPS).

Title II on critical victim services will: 1. Create a new, dedicated grant program for sexual assault victims that will strengthen the 1,300 rape crisis centers across the country; 2. reinvigorate programs to help older and disabled victims of domestic violence; 3. strengthen existing programs for rural victims and victims in underserved areas; and 4. increase funding to \$5 million annually for the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

Reports indicate that up to ten million children experience domestic violence in their homes each year. Experts agree that domestic violence affects children in multiple, complicated and long-lasting ways. Every risk, every injury, and every disruption that a battered woman endures is one that her children experiences as well. The complex impact of domestic violence--fear for one's safety at home, depression, loss of income, moving from the family home, school disruptions and grieving for a father--are complicated and traumatic for children. Treating children who witness domestic violence, dealing effectively with violent teenage relationships and teaching prevention strategies to children are keys to

ending the violence. Title III includes measures to: 1. Promote collaboration between domestic violence experts and child welfare agencies; and 2. enhance to \$15 million a year, grants to reduce violence against women on college campuses. Title IV focuses on prevention strategies and includes programs supporting home visitations and specifically engaging men and boys in efforts to end domestic and sexual violence.

Doctors and nurses, like police officers on the beat, are often the first witnesses of the devastating aftermath of abuse. As first responders, they must be fully engaged in the effort to end the violence and possess the tools they need to faithfully screen, treat, and study family violence. Title V strengthens the health care system's response to family violence with programs to train and educate health care professionals on domestic and sexual violence, foster family violence screening for patients, and more studies on the health ramifications of family violence.

In some instances, women face the untenable choice of returning to their abuser or becoming homeless. Indeed, 44 percent of the Nation's mayors identified domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness. Efforts to ease the housing problems for battered women are contained in Title VI, including: 1. Collaborative grant programs between domestic violence organizations and housing providers; 2. programs to combat family violence in public and assisted housing; and 3. enhancements to transitional housing resources.

Leaving a violent partner often requires battered women to achieve a level of economic security. Title VII seeks to help abused women maintain secure employment by permitting battered women to take limited employment leave to address domestic violence, such as attend court proceedings, or move to a shelter. This is an issue long championed by the late Senator Wellstone and Senator **MURRAY**, and I glad that we are able to include this provision in today's bill.

Despite the historic immigration law changes made in the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 that opened new and safe routes to immigration status, battered immigrant women often have a very difficult time escaping abuse because of immigration laws, language barriers, and social isolation. Title VIII's immigration provisions go a long way toward wresting immigration control away from the batterer and pave the way for the victim to leave a violent home. In addition, it would ensure that victims of trafficking are supported with measures such as permitting their families to join them in certain circumstances, expanding the duration of a T-visa, and providing resources to victims who assist in investigations or prosecutions of trafficking cases brought by State or Federal authorities.

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In an effort to focus more closely on violence against Indian women, Title IX creates a new tribal Deputy Director in the Office on Violence Against Women dedicated to coordinating Federal tribal policy. In addition, Title IX authorizes tribal governments to access and upload domestic violence and protection order data on criminal databases, as well as create tribal sex offender registries.

I am proud to introduce with Senators **HATCH** and **SPECTER** this comprehensive bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. I want to thank Senator **HATCH**, a longstanding champion on this issue, for diligently working on this bill with Senator **SPECTER** and me. Since 1990, Senator **HATCH** and I have worked together to end family violence in this country, so it is no great surprise that once again he worked side-by-side with us to craft today's bill. I am also deeply indebted to Senator **KENNEDY** for his unwavering commitment to battered immigrant women and his work on the bill's immigration provisions. I also thank Senator **LEAHY** who has long-supported the Violence Against Women Act and in particular, has worked on the rural programs and transitional housing provisions. Finally, I thank my very good friend from Pennsylvania for his commitment and leadership on this bill.

It is a pleasure to work with Senator **SPECTER**. I know that he will adeptly and expeditiously move the Violence Against Women Act through his Committee.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to review today's Violence Against Women Act of 2005 and add their support. I understand that there are other proposals that should be considered before the full Senate debates this legislation. Refinements will certainly be made to improve what is currently in this bill. I welcome any suggestions that you may have, and look forward to coming back to the floor to urge final passage of the Violence Against Women Act of 2005.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am proud to join Senators *Biden, Hatch, Specter* and other cosponsors to introduce today the bipartisan VAWA, the Violence Against Women Act of 2005.

Our Nation has made remarkable progress over the past 25 years in recognizing that domestic violence and sexual assault are crimes, providing legal remedies, social supports and coordinated community responses. Millions of women, men, children and families, however, continue to be traumatized by abuse, leading to increased rates of crime, violence and suffering.

I witnessed the devastating effects of domestic violence early in my career as the Vermont State's Attorney for Chittenden County. Violence and abuse affect people of all walks of life every day and regardless of gender, race, culture, age, class or sexuality. Such violence is a crime and it is always wrong, whether the abuser is a family member, someone the victim is dating, a current or past spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend, an acquaintance or a stranger.

The National Crime Victimization Survey estimates there were 691,710 non-fatal, violent incidents committed against victims by current and former spouses, boyfriends or girlfriends now termed intimate partners by DOJ--during 2001. Eight-five percent of those incidents were against women. The rate of non-fatal intimate partner violence against women has fallen steadily since 1993, when the rate was 9.8 incidents per 1,000 people. In 2001, the number fell to 5.0 incidents per 1,000 people, nearly a 50 percent reduction. Tragically, however, the survey found that 1,600 women were killed in 1976 by a current or former spouse or boyfriend, while in 2000 some 1,247 women were killed by their intimate partners.

VAWA became law in 1994 and was reauthorized in 2000. It has provided aid to law enforcement officers and prosecutors, encouraged arrest policies, stemmed domestic violence and child abuse, established training programs for victim advocates and counselors, and trained probation and parole officers who work with released sex offenders. This Congress we have the opportunity to reauthorize VAWA and make improvements to vital core programs, tighten criminal penalties against domestic abusers, and create new solutions to challenges in other crucial aspects of domestic violence and sexual assault, such as treating children victims of violence, augmenting health care for rape victims, holding repeat offenders and Internet stalkers accountable, and helping domestic violence victims keep their jobs.

I am particularly proud to note that included in VAWA 2005 are reauthorizations for two programs that I authored. In a small, rural State like Vermont, our county and local law enforcement agencies rely on cooperative, interagency efforts to combat and solve significant problems. That is why I authored the Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement Grant Program as part of the original VAWA. This program helps services available to rural victims and children by encouraging community involvement in developing a coordinated response to combat domestic violence, dating violence and child abuse. Adequate resources combined with sustained commitment will bring about significant improvements in rural areas to the lives of those victimized by domestic and sexual violence.

The Rural Grants Program section of VAWA 2005 reauthorizes and expands the existing education, training and services grant programs that address violence against women in rural areas. This provision renews the rural VAWA program, extends direct grants to state and local governments for services in rural areas and expands areas to include community collaboration projects in rural areas and the creation or expansion of additional victim services. This provision includes new language that expands the program coverage to sexual assault, child sexual assault and stalking. It also expands eligibility from rural states to rural communities, increasing access to rural sections of otherwise highly populated states. This section authorizes \$55,000,000 annually for 2006 through 2010, which is an increase of \$15 million per year.

The second grant program I authored that is included in VAWA 2005 is the Transitional Housing Assistance Grants for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking. This program, which became law as part of the Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to End the Exploitation of Children Today, the PROTECT Act of 2003, authorizes grants for transitional housing and related services for people fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault or stalkers. At a time when the availability of affordable housing has sunk to record lows, transitional housing for victims is especially needed. Today more than 50 percent of homeless individuals are women and children fleeing domestic violence. We have a clear problem that is in dire need of a solution. I want this program to be part of the solution.

Transitional housing allows women to bridge the gap between leaving violence in their homes and becoming self-sufficient. VAWA 2005 amends the existing transitional housing program administered by the Office on Violence Against Women in the Department of Justice. This section expands the current direct-assistance grants to include funds for operational, capital and renovation costs. Other changes include providing services to victims of dating violence, sexual assault and stalking; extending the length of time for receipt of benefits to match that used by Housing and Urban Development transitional housing programs; and updating the existing program to reflect the concerns of the service provision community. The provision would increase the authorized funding for the grant from \$30,000,000 to \$40,000,000.

Now it is time to strengthen the prevention of violence against women and children and its devastating costs and consequences. This legislation goes beyond simple words of recognition and efforts to increase awareness of the problem of violence to save the lives of battered women, rape victims and children who grow up with violence. I look forward to working further with fellow Senators on VAWA 2005 and I urge the Senate to take prompt action on this legislation.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I strongly support the Violence Against Women Act of 2005, and I commend Senator *Biden*, Senator *Specter*, and Senator *Hatch* for their bipartisan leadership on these major issues.

Violence against women is a very real and very serious continuing problem in the United States. The statistics are shocking.

Every 15 seconds, somewhere in America, a woman is battered, usually by her intimate partner.

Every 90 seconds, somewhere in America, someone is sexually assaulted.

On average, three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in America every day.

One out of every six American women have been the victims of a rape in their lifetime.

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These statistics are not just numbers. These violent acts are happening to mothers, sisters, daughters, and friends. We cannot tolerate this violence in our communities.

In 1994, Congress allocated funds to initiate efforts to prevent violence against women and families. The programs established under the Violence Against Women Act, and later expanded and reauthorized in 2000, have worked, and so will this legislation, because it takes needed additional steps to prevent such violence. It enhances law enforcement and judicial procedures to combat violence against women, and it also reinvigorates programs to help older and disabled victims of domestic violence.

Forty-four percent of the Nation's mayors identified domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness. This bill eases housing problems for battered women.

Victims of domestic violence need time off from work to obtain medical attention, counseling, and other support. This bill will provide that flexibility.

Doctors, nurses, and other health professionals are often the first responders for treating the injuries women suffer from domestic and sexual violence. It is essential for those who help them to be able to respond effectively and compassionately. When health providers screen for domestic violence and follow up on such cases, women are more likely to be safer over the long term. This bill includes new funds for training health professionals to recognize and respond to domestic and sexual violence, and to enable public health officials to recognize the need as well. The research funds provided by this bill are vital because we need the best possible interventions in health care settings to prevent future violence and help the victims.

Violence against women can occur throughout women's lives, beginning in childhood, continuing in adolescence, and in numerous contexts and settings. It is important for any bill on such violence to focus on girls and young women as well, and this bill does that.

In 1994, we included an important innovative provision in the bill to fund a National Domestic Violence Hotline. When the hotline opened in February 1996, victims of domestic violence across the nation finally had help available toll-free, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This legislation increases funding for that very important support.

Another important section of the bill provides greater help to immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking and similar offenses. This section builds on the current Act and is designed to remove the obstacles in immigration laws that prevent such victims from safely fleeing the violence in their lives, and to dispel the fear that often prevents them from prosecuting their abusers.

Eliminating domestic violence is especially challenging in immigrant communities, where victims often face additional cultural, linguistic and immigration barriers to seeking safety. Abusers of immigrant spouses or children are liable to use threats of deportation against them, trapping them in endless years of violence. Many of us have heard horrific stories of violence in cases where the threat of deportation was used against immigrant spouses and children--"If you leave me, I'll report you to the immigration authorities, and you'll never see the children again." Or the abuser says, "If you tell the police what I did, I'll have immigration deport you."

Congress has made significant progress in enacting protections for these immigrant victims, but there are still many women and children whose lives are in danger. Our bill extends immigration relief to all

victims of family violence, including victims of elder abuse, incest and stalking. It ensures economic security for immigrant victims and their children by providing work authorization for victims with valid immigration cases. It makes it easier for victims of trafficking to obtain federal benefits if they assist in the investigation or prosecution of trafficking crimes.

I commend the sponsors of this legislation for working with us on this issue and for making domestic violence in immigrant communities an important priority in our overall effort to combat violence against women.

We have a responsibility in Congress to do all we can to eradicate domestic violence. Our bill gives the safety of women and their families the high priority it deserves, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

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the Act's rural grant program helped the Delaware State Police establish fully-equipped, dedicated domestic violence units in two counties. The STOP program provided a Hispanic shelter with funding to purchase a van to pick up battered women and their children who have nowhere else to turn.

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The Rural Grants Program section of VAWA 2005 reauthorizes and expands the existing education, training and services grant programs that address violence against women in rural areas. This provision renews the rural VAWA program, extends direct grants to state and local governments for services in rural areas and expands areas to include community collaboration projects in rural areas and the creation or expansion of additional victim services. This provision includes new language that expands the program coverage to sexual assault, child sexual assault and stalking. It also expands eligibility from rural states to rural communities, increasing access to rural sections of otherwise highly populated states. This section authorizes \$55,000,000 annually for 2006 through 2010, which is an increase of \$15 million per year.

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Now it is time to strengthen the prevention of violence against women and children and its devastating costs and consequences. This legislation goes beyond simple words of recognition and efforts to increase awareness of the problem of violence to save the lives of battered women, rape victims and children who grow up with violence. I look forward to working further with fellow Senators on VAWA 2005 and I urge the Senate to take prompt action on this legislation.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I strongly support the Violence Against Women Act of 2005, and I commend Senator *Biden*, Senator *Specter*, and Senator *Hatch* for their bipartisan leadership on these major issues.

Violence against women is a very real and very serious continuing problem in the United States. The statistics are shocking.

Every 15 seconds, somewhere in America, a woman is battered, usually by her intimate partner.

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On average, three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in America every day.

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These statistics are not just numbers. These violent acts are happening to mothers, sisters, daughters, and friends. We cannot tolerate this violence in our communities.

In 1994, Congress allocated funds to initiate efforts to prevent violence against women and families. The programs established under the Violence Against Women Act, and later expanded and reauthorized in 2000, have worked, and so will this legislation, because it takes needed additional steps to prevent such violence. It enhances law enforcement and judicial procedures to combat violence against women, and it also reinvigorates programs to help older and disabled victims of domestic violence.

Forty-four percent of the Nation's mayors identified domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness. This bill eases housing problems for battered women.

Victims of domestic violence need time off from work to obtain medical attention, counseling, and other support. This bill will provide that flexibility.

Doctors, nurses, and other health professionals are often the first responders for treating the injuries women suffer from domestic and sexual violence. It is essential for those who help them to be able to respond effectively and compassionately. When health providers screen for domestic violence and follow up on such cases, women are more likely to be safer over the long term. This bill includes new funds for training health professionals to recognize and respond to domestic and sexual violence, and to enable public health officials to recognize the need as well. The research funds provided by this bill are vital because we need the best possible interventions in health care settings to prevent future violence and help the victims.

Violence against women can occur throughout women's lives, beginning in childhood, continuing in adolescence, and in numerous contexts and settings. It is important for any bill on such violence to focus on girls and young women as well, and this bill does that.

In 1994, we included an important innovative provision in the bill to fund a National Domestic Violence Hotline. When the hotline opened in February 1996, victims of domestic violence across the nation finally had help available toll-free, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This legislation increases funding for that very important support.

Another important section of the bill provides greater help to immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking and similar offenses. This section builds on the current Act and is designed to remove the obstacles in immigration laws that prevent such victims from safely fleeing the violence in their lives, and to dispel the fear that often prevents them from prosecuting their abusers.

Eliminating domestic violence is especially challenging in immigrant communities, where victims often face additional cultural, linguistic and immigration barriers to seeking safety. Abusers of immigrant spouses or children are liable to use threats of deportation against them, trapping them in endless years of violence. Many of us have heard horrific stories of violence in cases where the threat of deportation was used against immigrant spouses and children--"If you leave me, I'll report you to the immigration authorities, and you'll never see the children again." Or the abuser says, "If you tell the police what I did, I'll have immigration deport you."

Congress has made significant progress in enacting protections for these immigrant victims, but there are still many women and children whose lives are in danger. Our bill extends immigration relief to all

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I commend the sponsors of this legislation for working with us on this issue and for making domestic violence in immigrant communities an important priority in our overall effort to combat violence against women.

We have a responsibility in Congress to do all we can to eradicate domestic violence. Our bill gives the safety of women and their families the high priority it deserves, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

By Mr. BIDEN (for himself, Mr. **HATCH**, Mr. **SPECTER**, Mr.

S. 1197. A bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to announce today the introduction of the Biden/Hatch/Specter Violence Against Women Act of 2005. Many in this chamber are well aware that I consider the Violence Against Women Act the single most significant legislation that I've crafted during my 32-year tenure in the Senate. This law is my baby, so to speak, and I take very seriously my responsibilities to ensure that it is adequately funded and renewed. What was once an infant statute seeking legitimacy in the public eye and in the halls of government is now a feisty ten-year law that has made its presence known from Long Beach, CA to Dover, DE. But in September 2005, the Act will expire. Congress and the President must act quickly in the next three months to renew the backbone of our country's fight to end domestic violence and sexual assault, the Violence Against Women Act. We simply cannot let the Act lapse or become buried in partisan bickering.

The enactment of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994 was the beginning of a national and historic commitment to women and children victimized by domestic violence and sexual assault. Thus far, our commitment has yielded extraordinary progress. Since the Act's passage, domestic violence has dropped by almost 50 percent. Incidents of rape are down by 60 percent. The number of women killed by an abusive husband or boyfriend is down by 22 percent. More than half of all rape victims are stepping forward to report the crime. Over a million women have found justice in our courtrooms and obtained domestic violence protective orders.

The Violence Against Women Act provides critical resources so that our communities may implement big and small improvements that can make all the difference in the world. For instance, in my home State of Delaware,

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the Act's rural grant program helped the Delaware State Police establish fully-equipped, dedicated domestic violence units in two counties. The STOP program provided a Hispanic shelter with funding to purchase a van to pick up battered women and their children who have nowhere else to turn.

Today, we uphold our commitment to America's families. Despite the incredible strides made, far too many women remain afraid to go home or afraid to tell anyone about the rape that happened at last night's party. We cannot let the Violence Against Women Act become a victim of its own success. Instead, we need to usher the Act into the 21st century and implement it with the next generation--recent police academy graduates who want to be trained on handling family violence, newly elected State legislators who want to update State laws on sexual assault, and the next generation of children who must be taught that abuse will not be tolerated.

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the violence--police, emergency room nurses, victim advocates, shelter directors, and prosecutors--and made targeted improvements to existing grant programs and tightened up criminal laws. A wide variety of groups worked hard with Senator **SPECTER**, Senator **HATCH** and I to create this bill, including the

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the Family Violence Prevention Fund, Legal Momentum, the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, the National Center for Victims of Crime, the American Bar Association, the National District Attorneys Association, the National Council on Family and Juvenile Court Judges, the National Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association and many others.

Before previewing the particulars of today's bill, I want to explain a few of my principles guiding the drafting of the Violence Against Women Act of 2005. First, I remain dedicated to the cornerstone programs in the Act such as the STOP grant program, the Rural Grant program and the National Domestic Violence Hotline. These are enormously successful initiatives that are the scaffolding of the Act. These foundations must be strengthened, not neglected.

Second, ending domestic violence and sexual assault has, and will continue to cost money. This is simply not a goal that can be accomplished on the cheap. Our success in ending family violence is not a signal to reduce funding; rather the opposite is so. We can't afford to lose the gains that we have made. We've found a winning combination, and Congress should continue to spend its money so effectively.

Third, today's bill is an ambitious, but reasoned, effort to solve the next level of challenges for battered women and their children. We've made tremendous strides in treating domestic violence and sexual assaults as public crimes with accountable offenders and creating coordinated community responses to help victims. Our next task is to look beyond the immediate crisis and provide long-term solutions for victims, as well as redouble our prevention efforts. Therefore, this bill includes important efforts to ease the housing crisis for victims fleeing their homes, provide more economic security for victims by preserving their employment stability, engage boys and men in initiatives to prevent domestic violence from occurring in the first place, and enlist the healthcare community in identifying and treating victims.

My final principle is that ending violence against women is truly a shared goal--one that is held by Democrats and Republicans, one that is upheld by men and women, and one that is desired by both government and by the private sector. The continued success of the Violence Against Women Act depends upon bipartisanship commitment.

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Title II on critical victim services will: 1. Create a new, dedicated grant program for sexual assault victims that will strengthen the 1,300 rape crisis centers across the country; 2. reinvigorate programs to help older and disabled victims of domestic violence; 3. strengthen existing programs for rural victims and victims in underserved areas; and 4. increase funding to \$5 million annually for the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

Reports indicate that up to ten million children experience domestic violence in their homes each year. Experts agree that domestic violence affects children in multiple, complicated and long-lasting ways. Every risk, every injury, and every disruption that a battered woman endures is one that her children experiences as well. The complex impact of domestic violence--fear for one's safety at home, depression, loss of income, moving from the family home, school disruptions and grieving for a father--are complicated and traumatic for children. Treating children who witness domestic violence, dealing effectively with violent teenage relationships and teaching prevention strategies to children are keys to

ending the violence. Title III includes measures to: 1. Promote collaboration between domestic violence experts and child welfare agencies; and 2. enhance to \$15 million a year, grants to reduce violence against women on college campuses. Title IV focuses on prevention strategies and includes programs supporting home visitations and specifically engaging men and boys in efforts to end domestic and sexual violence.

Doctors and nurses, like police officers on the beat, are often the first witnesses of the devastating aftermath of abuse. As first responders, they must be fully engaged in the effort to end the violence and possess the tools they need to faithfully screen, treat, and study family violence. Title V strengthens the health care system's response to family violence with programs to train and educate health care professionals on domestic and sexual violence, foster family violence screening for patients, and more studies on the health ramifications of family violence.

In some instances, women face the untenable choice of returning to their abuser or becoming homeless. Indeed, 44 percent of the Nation's mayors identified domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness. Efforts to ease the housing problems for battered women are contained in Title VI, including: 1. Collaborative grant programs between domestic violence organizations and housing providers; 2. programs to combat family violence in public and assisted housing; and 3. enhancements to transitional housing resources.

Leaving a violent partner often requires battered women to achieve a level of economic security. Title VII seeks to help abused women maintain secure employment by permitting battered women to take limited employment leave to address domestic violence, such as attend court proceedings, or move to a shelter. This is an issue long championed by the late Senator Wellstone and Senator **MURRAY**, and I glad that we are able to include this provision in today's bill.

Despite the historic immigration law changes made in the Violence Against Women Act of 2000 that opened new and safe routes to immigration status, battered immigrant women often have a very difficult time escaping abuse because of immigration laws, language barriers, and social isolation. Title VIII's immigration provisions go a long way toward wresting immigration control away from the batterer and pave the way for the victim to leave a violent home. In addition, it would ensure that victims of trafficking are supported with measures such as permitting their families to join them in certain circumstances, expanding the duration of a T-visa, and providing resources to victims who assist in investigations or prosecutions of trafficking cases brought by State or Federal authorities.

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In an effort to focus more closely on violence against Indian women, Title IX creates a new tribal Deputy Director in the Office on Violence Against Women dedicated to coordinating Federal tribal policy. In addition, Title IX authorizes tribal governments to access and upload domestic violence and protection order data on criminal databases, as well as create tribal sex offender registries.

I am proud to introduce with Senators **HATCH** and **SPECTER** this comprehensive bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. I want to thank Senator **HATCH**, a longstanding champion on this issue, for diligently working on this bill with Senator **SPECTER** and me. Since 1990, Senator **HATCH** and I have worked together to end family violence in this country, so it is no great surprise that once again he worked side-by-side with us to craft today's bill. I am also deeply indebted to Senator **KENNEDY** for his unwavering commitment to battered immigrant women and his work on the bill's immigration provisions. I also thank Senator **LEAHY** who has long-supported the Violence Against Women Act and in particular, has worked on the rural programs and transitional housing provisions. Finally, I thank my very good friend from Pennsylvania for his commitment and leadership on this bill.

It is a pleasure to work with Senator **SPECTER**. I know that he will adeptly and expeditiously move the Violence Against Women Act through his Committee.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to review today's Violence Against Women Act of 2005 and add their support. I understand that there are other proposals that should be considered before the full Senate debates this legislation. Refinements will certainly be made to improve what is currently in this bill. I welcome any suggestions that you may have, and look forward to coming back to the floor to urge final passage of the Violence Against Women Act of 2005.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am proud to join Senators *Biden, Hatch, Specter* and other cosponsors to introduce today the bipartisan VAWA, the Violence Against Women Act of 2005.

Our Nation has made remarkable progress over the past 25 years in recognizing that domestic violence and sexual assault are crimes, providing legal remedies, social supports and coordinated community responses. Millions of women, men, children and families, however, continue to be traumatized by abuse, leading to increased rates of crime, violence and suffering.

I witnessed the devastating effects of domestic violence early in my career as the Vermont State's Attorney for Chittenden County. Violence and abuse affect people of all walks of life every day and regardless of gender, race, culture, age, class or sexuality. Such violence is a crime and it is always wrong, whether the abuser is a family member, someone the victim is dating, a current or past spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend, an acquaintance or a stranger.

The National Crime Victimization Survey estimates there were 691,710 non-fatal, violent incidents committed against victims by current and former spouses, boyfriends or girlfriends now termed intimate partners by DOJ--during 2001. Eight-five percent of those incidents were against women. The rate of non-fatal intimate partner violence against women has fallen steadily since 1993, when the rate was 9.8 incidents per 1,000 people. In 2001, the number fell to 5.0 incidents per 1,000 people, nearly a 50 percent reduction. Tragically, however, the survey found that 1,600 women were killed in 1976 by a current or former spouse or boyfriend, while in 2000 some 1,247 women were killed by their intimate partners.

VAWA became law in 1994 and was reauthorized in 2000. It has provided aid to law enforcement officers and prosecutors, encouraged arrest policies, stemmed domestic violence and child abuse, established training programs for victim advocates and counselors, and trained probation and parole officers who work with released sex offenders. This Congress we have the opportunity to reauthorize VAWA and make improvements to vital core programs, tighten criminal penalties against domestic abusers, and create new solutions to challenges in other crucial aspects of domestic violence and sexual assault, such as treating children victims of violence, augmenting health care for rape victims, holding repeat offenders and Internet stalkers accountable, and helping domestic violence victims keep their jobs.

I am particularly proud to note that included in VAWA 2005 are reauthorizations for two programs that I authored. In a small, rural State like Vermont, our county and local law enforcement agencies rely on cooperative, interagency efforts to combat and solve significant problems. That is why I authored the Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement Grant Program as part of the original VAWA. This program helps services available to rural victims and children by encouraging community involvement in developing a coordinated response to combat domestic violence, dating violence and child abuse. Adequate resources combined with sustained commitment will bring about significant improvements in rural areas to the lives of those victimized by domestic and sexual violence.

The Rural Grants Program section of VAWA 2005 reauthorizes and expands the existing education, training and services grant programs that address violence against women in rural areas. This provision renews the rural VAWA program, extends direct grants to state and local governments for services in rural areas and expands areas to include community collaboration projects in rural areas and the creation or expansion of additional victim services. This provision includes new language that expands the program coverage to sexual assault, child sexual assault and stalking. It also expands eligibility from rural states to rural communities, increasing access to rural sections of otherwise highly populated states. This section authorizes \$55,000,000 annually for 2006 through 2010, which is an increase of \$15 million per year.

The second grant program I authored that is included in VAWA 2005 is the Transitional Housing Assistance Grants for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking. This program, which became law as part of the Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to End the Exploitation of Children Today, the PROTECT Act of 2003, authorizes grants for transitional housing and related services for people fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault or stalkers. At a time when the availability of affordable housing has sunk to record lows, transitional housing for victims is especially needed. Today more than 50 percent of homeless individuals are women and children fleeing domestic violence. We have a clear problem that is in dire need of a solution. I want this program to be part of the solution.

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I commend the sponsors of this legislation for working with us on this issue and for making domestic violence in immigrant communities an important priority in our overall effort to combat violence against women.

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In an effort to focus more closely on violence against Indian women, Title IX creates a new tribal Deputy Director in the Office on Violence Against Women dedicated to coordinating Federal tribal policy. In addition, Title IX authorizes tribal governments to access and upload domestic violence and protection order data on criminal databases, as well as create tribal sex offender registries.

I am proud to introduce with Senators **HATCH** and **SPECTER** this comprehensive bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. I want to thank Senator **HATCH**, a longstanding champion on this issue, for diligently working on this bill with Senator **SPECTER** and me. Since 1990, Senator **HATCH** and I have worked together to end family violence in this country, so it is no great surprise that once again he worked side-by-side with us to craft today's bill. I am also deeply indebted to Senator **KENNEDY** for his unwavering commitment to battered immigrant women and his work on the bill's immigration provisions. I also thank Senator **LEAHY** who has long-supported the Violence Against Women Act and in particular, has worked on the rural programs and transitional housing provisions. Finally, I thank my very good friend from Pennsylvania for his commitment and leadership on this bill.

It is a pleasure to work with Senator **SPECTER**. I know that he will adeptly and expeditiously move the Violence Against Women Act through his Committee.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to review today's Violence Against Women Act of 2005 and add their support. I understand that there are other proposals that should be considered before the full Senate debates this legislation. Refinements will certainly be made to improve what is currently in this bill. I welcome any suggestions that you may have, and look forward to coming back to the floor to urge final passage of the Violence Against Women Act of 2005.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am proud to join Senators *Biden, Hatch, Specter* and other cosponsors to introduce today the bipartisan VAWA, the Violence Against Women Act of 2005.

Our Nation has made remarkable progress over the past 25 years in recognizing that domestic violence and sexual assault are crimes, providing legal remedies, social supports and coordinated community responses. Millions of women, men, children and families, however, continue to be traumatized by abuse, leading to increased rates of crime, violence and suffering.

I witnessed the devastating effects of domestic violence early in my career as the Vermont State's Attorney for Chittenden County. Violence and abuse affect people of all walks of life every day and regardless of gender, race, culture, age, class or sexuality. Such violence is a crime and it is always wrong, whether the abuser is a family member, someone the victim is dating, a current or past spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend, an acquaintance or a stranger.

The National Crime Victimization Survey estimates there were 691,710 non-fatal, violent incidents committed against victims by current and former spouses, boyfriends or girlfriends now termed intimate partners by DOJ--during 2001. Eight-five percent of those incidents were against women. The rate of non-fatal intimate partner violence against women has fallen steadily since 1993, when the rate was 9.8 incidents per 1,000 people. In 2001, the number fell to 5.0 incidents per 1,000 people, nearly a 50 percent reduction. Tragically, however, the survey found that 1,600 women were killed in 1976 by a current or former spouse or boyfriend, while in 2000 some 1,247 women were killed by their intimate partners.

VAWA became law in 1994 and was reauthorized in 2000. It has provided aid to law enforcement officers and prosecutors, encouraged arrest policies, stemmed domestic violence and child abuse, established training programs for victim advocates and counselors, and trained probation and parole officers who work with released sex offenders. This Congress we have the opportunity to reauthorize VAWA and make improvements to vital core programs, tighten criminal penalties against domestic abusers, and create new solutions to challenges in other crucial aspects of domestic violence and sexual assault, such as treating children victims of violence, augmenting health care for rape victims, holding repeat offenders and Internet stalkers accountable, and helping domestic violence victims keep their jobs.

I am particularly proud to note that included in VAWA 2005 are reauthorizations for two programs that I authored. In a small, rural State like Vermont, our county and local law enforcement agencies rely on cooperative, interagency efforts to combat and solve significant problems. That is why I authored the Rural Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement Grant Program as part of the original VAWA. This program helps services available to rural victims and children by encouraging community involvement in developing a coordinated response to combat domestic violence, dating violence and child abuse. Adequate resources combined with sustained commitment will bring about significant improvements in rural areas to the lives of those victimized by domestic and sexual violence.

The Rural Grants Program section of VAWA 2005 reauthorizes and expands the existing education, training and services grant programs that address violence against women in rural areas. This provision renews the rural VAWA program, extends direct grants to state and local governments for services in rural areas and expands areas to include community collaboration projects in rural areas and the creation or expansion of additional victim services. This provision includes new language that expands the program coverage to sexual assault, child sexual assault and stalking. It also expands eligibility from rural states to rural communities, increasing access to rural sections of otherwise highly populated states. This section authorizes \$55,000,000 annually for 2006 through 2010, which is an increase of \$15 million per year.

The second grant program I authored that is included in VAWA 2005 is the Transitional Housing Assistance Grants for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking. This program, which became law as part of the Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to End the Exploitation of Children Today, the PROTECT Act of 2003, authorizes grants for transitional housing and related services for people fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault or stalkers. At a time when the availability of affordable housing has sunk to record lows, transitional housing for victims is especially needed. Today more than 50 percent of homeless individuals are women and children fleeing domestic violence. We have a clear problem that is in dire need of a solution. I want this program to be part of the solution.

Transitional housing allows women to bridge the gap between leaving violence in their homes and becoming self-sufficient. VAWA 2005 amends the existing transitional housing program administered by the Office on Violence Against Women in the Department of Justice. This section expands the current direct-assistance grants to include funds for operational, capital and renovation costs. Other changes include providing services to victims of dating violence, sexual assault and stalking; extending the length of time for receipt of benefits to match that used by Housing and Urban Development transitional housing programs; and updating the existing program to reflect the concerns of the service provision community. The provision would increase the authorized funding for the grant from \$30,000,000 to \$40,000,000.

Now it is time to strengthen the prevention of violence against women and children and its devastating costs and consequences. This legislation goes beyond simple words of recognition and efforts to increase awareness of the problem of violence to save the lives of battered women, rape victims and children who grow up with violence. I look forward to working further with fellow Senators on VAWA 2005 and I urge the Senate to take prompt action on this legislation.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I strongly support the Violence Against Women Act of 2005, and I commend Senator *Biden*, Senator *Specter*, and Senator *Hatch* for their bipartisan leadership on these major issues.

Violence against women is a very real and very serious continuing problem in the United States. The statistics are shocking.

Every 15 seconds, somewhere in America, a woman is battered, usually by her intimate partner.

Every 90 seconds, somewhere in America, someone is sexually assaulted.

On average, three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in America every day.

One out of every six American women have been the victims of a rape in their lifetime.

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These statistics are not just numbers. These violent acts are happening to mothers, sisters, daughters, and friends. We cannot tolerate this violence in our communities.

In 1994, Congress allocated funds to initiate efforts to prevent violence against women and families. The programs established under the Violence Against Women Act, and later expanded and reauthorized in 2000, have worked, and so will this legislation, because it takes needed additional steps to prevent such violence. It enhances law enforcement and judicial procedures to combat violence against women, and it also reinvigorates programs to help older and disabled victims of domestic violence.

Forty-four percent of the Nation's mayors identified domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness. This bill eases housing problems for battered women.

Victims of domestic violence need time off from work to obtain medical attention, counseling, and other support. This bill will provide that flexibility.

Doctors, nurses, and other health professionals are often the first responders for treating the injuries women suffer from domestic and sexual violence. It is essential for those who help them to be able to respond effectively and compassionately. When health providers screen for domestic violence and follow up on such cases, women are more likely to be safer over the long term. This bill includes new funds for training health professionals to recognize and respond to domestic and sexual violence, and to enable public health officials to recognize the need as well. The research funds provided by this bill are vital because we need the best possible interventions in health care settings to prevent future violence and help the victims.

Violence against women can occur throughout women's lives, beginning in childhood, continuing in adolescence, and in numerous contexts and settings. It is important for any bill on such violence to focus on girls and young women as well, and this bill does that.

In 1994, we included an important innovative provision in the bill to fund a National Domestic Violence Hotline. When the hotline opened in February 1996, victims of domestic violence across the nation finally had help available toll-free, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This legislation increases funding for that very important support.

Another important section of the bill provides greater help to immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking and similar offenses. This section builds on the current Act and is designed to remove the obstacles in immigration laws that prevent such victims from safely fleeing the violence in their lives, and to dispel the fear that often prevents them from prosecuting their abusers.

Eliminating domestic violence is especially challenging in immigrant communities, where victims often face additional cultural, linguistic and immigration barriers to seeking safety. Abusers of immigrant spouses or children are liable to use threats of deportation against them, trapping them in endless years of violence. Many of us have heard horrific stories of violence in cases where the threat of deportation was used against immigrant spouses and children--"If you leave me, I'll report you to the immigration authorities, and you'll never see the children again." Or the abuser says, "If you tell the police what I did, I'll have immigration deport you."

Congress has made significant progress in enacting protections for these immigrant victims, but there are still many women and children whose lives are in danger. Our bill extends immigration relief to all

victims of family violence, including victims of elder abuse, incest and stalking. It ensures economic security for immigrant victims and their children by providing work authorization for victims with valid immigration cases. It makes it easier for victims of trafficking to obtain federal benefits if they assist in the investigation or prosecution of trafficking crimes.

I commend the sponsors of this legislation for working with us on this issue and for making domestic violence in immigrant communities an important priority in our overall effort to combat violence against women.

We have a responsibility in Congress to do all we can to eradicate domestic violence. Our bill gives the safety of women and their families the high priority it deserves, and I urge my colleagues to support it.