

Congresswoman Gwen Moore
Brief Remarks
Rules Committee
May 15, 2012
Democratic VAWA Substitute

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gwen Moore', is positioned to the right of the title block.

- I am here to offer an amendment, along with Mr. John Conyers, Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee, and Ms. Lofgren (Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Immigration Policy and Enforcement). This amendment is supported by many of our female Democratic colleagues, as well as members of the Judiciary Committee.
- This amendment is a substitute for the Violence Against Women Act legislation, HR 4970, that is scheduled for consideration on the House floor tomorrow. Our substitute is based on the Senate-passed, bipartisan bill—which is similar to the bill I authored on the House side, HR 4271.
- This legislation garnered 68 votes on the Senate side, including 15 Republicans, and has the support of the domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy coalition—unlike HR 4970, which is widely opposed, by literally hundreds of victims' rights organizations (more than 170 organizations!).
- I have great respect for many of the members of this committee, and many in your party, but I must voice my extreme opposition to this harmful VAWA bill, which House Republicans are somehow still defending.
- This bill, which passed out of House Judiciary by a nearly party-line vote (would have been party line had Mr. Poe not been so sensible and voted “no”), does not include the updates that are so greatly needed to improve the way VAWA works, for all populations.

- The three key improvements that we've added in this reauthorization—protections for tribal women, for immigrants, and for LGBT victims—actually reflect input from around 2000 service providers who have witnessed violence and its aftermath for years. These are not the political “wedge” issues they've been billed as; they are truly the result of input on “best practices” and what's needed from the field. These updates offer nothing short of critical, lifesaving assistance for women, men, and children.
- What's more—this bill actually rolls back years of progress we've made on VAWA, and cuts into existing protections. HR 4970, according to the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women, “is genuinely dangerous for immigrant women and their families. It includes damaging provisions that create obstacles for immigrant victims to report crimes, increases danger for immigrant victims by eliminating important confidentiality protections, and undermines effective anti-fraud protections that exist in current law.”
- The substitute I am offering here today fulfills VAWA's promise to serve all victims, from all walks of life.
- I would hope that you would consider making this amendment in order, and maintaining at least some semblance of an open process, so we can focus on working together on a bipartisan bill modeled after the Senate-passed VAWA legislation.
- We would welcome the opportunity to work together with you on a bill that provides resources and vital protections for all victims in the most efficient manner possible, and successfully empowers law enforcement to go after abusers.
- Thank you.

“Chairman Dreier, Ranking Member Slaughter, and Members of the Rules Committee, the men and women in our local law enforcement play an essential role in safeguarding our communities and protecting the freedoms all of us enjoy. Bulletproof vests and body armor have saved thousands of law enforcement officers responding to all types of calls ranging from domestic violence to armed robberies. However, they cannot protect the lives of those who do not have access to them.

As protectors of our lives and our property, it is imperative that we give law enforcement the critical tools they need so they may do their jobs and carry out their duties safely and effectively. The Bulletproof Vest Partnership program is one of those critical tools and the LoBiondo/Visclosky amendment simply extends the grant program through 2016.

Since Fiscal Year 1999, the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program has purchased over 800,000 bulletproof vests for over 13,000 jurisdictions in the U.S. In FY 2011 alone, the Program provided purchased approximately 188,272 new bulletproof vests to state and local law enforcement agencies across America.

This program works and we should ensure it is given a chance to continue its successful track record.”

FY1 - \$ 50 MILLION / YEAR