



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

John Gage
National President

J. David Cox, Sr.
National Secretary-Treasurer

Augusta Y. Thomas
National Vice President for
Women and Fair Practices

December 5, 2011

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO (AFGE) representing over 650,000 workers in the federal government, I strongly urge you to cosponsor S.1925, the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization (VAWA) recently introduced by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID). The bipartisan support for S. 1925 reflects the national commitment to protect women against domestic and sexual violence either whether in the home or on the job.

VAWA created programs to provide support, services, and safety for victims of domestic and sexual violence. S. 1925 strengthens those programs and will better serve immigrant and tribal women who suffer abuse, and extends the funding to additional organizations offering victim services. The legislation includes important grants for housing assistance and training healthcare providers. The VAWA reauthorization bill builds on the awareness raised by VAWA when it was enacted in 1994.

S. 1925 recognizes the economic challenges to victims of domestic and sexual violence by reauthorizing funding for the National Resource Center on Workplace Responses. As National Vice President for Women and Fair Practices at AFGE, I have firsthand knowledge of how the consequences of sexual and domestic violence can lead to issues on the job, including the loss of employment. AFGE looks forward to working with Senators to ensure that victims of domestic violence are granted up to four days of paid leave or eight days of unpaid leave to participate in court proceedings and to seek necessary medical services resulting from that violence. Leave should also be granted to victims of domestic violence to deal with additional legal, medical, and housing needs. These protections are necessary to ensure that victims of domestic violence are encouraged to seek safety without fear of reprisal from an employer, have the resources necessary to seek that safety, and further abolish the stigma of domestic violence.

AFGE is committed to working with Senator Leahy to ensure swift passage and enactment of S. 1925. Please contact Anya McMurray or Noah Bookbinder at (202) 224-7703 to sign on to the bill. Again, I strongly urge you to cosponsor S. 1925, the VAWA Reauthorization Act.

Sincerely yours,

Augusta Y. Thomas
National Vice President
Women's and Fair Practices Departments

