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July 24, 2018

The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Sheila Jackson Lee:

Jewish Women International (JWI), the leading Jewish organization working to end gender-based violence, applauds your steadfast dedication and leadership in introducing the Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act of 2018.

As a Steering Committee member of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, and convener of the Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and Clergy Task Force to End Domestic Abuse in the Jewish Community, JWI supports this bill that builds on VAWA's previous successes and adds modest enhancements to ensure the safety of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is our nation's single most effective tool in responding to the devastating crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking – providing lifesaving programs and services. Since its initial passage in 1994, and subsequent reauthorizations in 2000, 2005, and 2013, VAWA has dramatically enhanced and improved our nation's response to violence against women. VAWA is essential in the funding of programs and services that survivors rely on every day. This commonsense legislation protects victims and survivors, helps save lives, and makes our communities safer places to worship, heal, and thrive.

Even with all of the advancements in the last twenty-four years, there is still a tremendous amount of work that remains. One third of all women (nearly 52 million women) in the United States have been victims of physical violence by an intimate partner. In 2016 alone, there were 1.1 million domestic violence victimizations, 54% of which involved domestic partners. The Department of Justice's Criminal Victimization 2016 Bulletin found that more than 10% of all violent crime is due to intimate partner violence.



The Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act of 2018 responds to the urgent issues survivors face every day by supporting programming to prevent gender-based violence, closing Tribal and firearms loopholes to protect all survivors, strengthening public housing protections for survivors, implementing alternative justice responses focused on victim autonomy and agency, and expanding the ability of providers to respond to sexual harassment.

JWI greatly appreciates your dedication and leadership in advancing the critical mission of passing a bipartisan bill with necessary and moderate enhancements. Every five years Congress has an opportunity to come together and pass meaningful legislation to help save the lives of victims of gender-based violence, and we are grateful that you are spearheading this effort.

Thank you again for championing this life saving legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lori Weinstein'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Lori Weinstein
CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Vivian A. Bass'. The signature is cursive and elegant, with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Vivian Bass
Chair, Board of Trustees