



Pass I-VAWA Now!

ACTION TOOLKIT

November 8 – December 10, 2010

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TAKE ACTION for the International Violence Against Women Act!

Dear Friends,

Thank you for taking action to support the International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA)! In this Action Kit, you will find background information and talking points on the I-VAWA, ways you can take action no matter how much or little time you have, and sample materials to get you started.

Building on the momentum from our work this year, we are organizing a big push to **pass the I-VAWA in 2010** during the post-election “lame duck” session of the 111th Congress. The dates for this intensive campaign are based on information about what congressional leaders may advance during the session, which only lasts a few weeks and begins on November 15. The push also centers around commemorative dates like the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (November 25), Sixteen Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (November 25 to December 10) and others that are important to activists and leaders around the world who work to stop this horrific violence.

Many of you have taken action on I-VAWA in the past by visiting your Members of Congress, sending letters, making calls, posting messages on Facebook and Twitter, and demonstrating support in your communities for ending violence against women and girls globally. Some examples of effective activism include:

- The news conference organized by Amnesty International USA, CARE and Tahirih Justice Center in Houston, Texas and the joint thank you letter to I-VAWA co-sponsor Rep. Ted Poe that was signed by more than 20 diverse local organizations.
- The Women’s Studies Club at Cedar Springs High Schools in Michigan organized a call-in session during which activists used the script included in this kit to send messages to their elected officials.
- A packed-house presentation at Marion University in Indiana featuring prominent experts on global violence against women including United Nation’s peace-keeping expert Major General Patrick Cammaert and U.S. Representative Dan Burton.

To help you plan your own activities in this packet you will find:

- Templates of letters to Members of Congress
- A script for activists to use when calling their elected officials
- A sample op-ed, email action template, letter to the editor, and blog post to help raise visibility in your community for this important issue.

Don’t forget it is critical that we thank Members of Congress who have co-sponsored I-VAWA and continue to urge those who haven’t yet co-sponsored the bill to support passage!

Please go through the kit and decide which actions you would like to take. If you have any questions, please contact the I-VAWA team by emailing njambi@endabuse.org. This Action Kit is also available at www.passivawa.org/. Thanks to pressure from grassroots activists, I-VAWA was reintroduced in 2010. Let’s pass it this year as well!

Daphne Jayasinghe,
Amnesty International USA

Kiersten Stewart,
Family Violence Prevention Fund

Nora O’Connell,
Women Thrive Worldwide

Background on International Violence Against Women Act

Violence Against Women Remains a Global Pandemic with Horrific Consequences

Violence against women is a worldwide human rights violation and a public health epidemic that knows no cultural, national or ethnic boundaries. At least one out of every three women in the world will be beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. One billion women and girls are affected by such violence, including rape, domestic violence, acid burning, dowry deaths, so-called honor killings, human trafficking, female genital cutting and other harmful practices. In some countries, close to 70 percent of women report such violence, and in times of conflict, mass rape is often used as a weapon of war. We need only look to the horrific sexual violence in Congo and Haiti, the stoning of a mother in Iran, and the physical attacks experienced by Afghan girls trying to go to school or flee an abusive forced marriage to recognize the horror and extent of the violence that continues today.

But most importantly women and girls are fighting back. They are looking to the United States to help support their efforts to reform their own lives and their governments. The U.S. Congress now has legislation before it that would support that work: the International Violence Against Women Act.

Background and Current Status of International Violence Against Women Act

The International Violence Against Women Act (H.R. 4594 /S. 2982) is groundbreaking legislation that would for the first time make ending violence against women and girls a U.S. foreign policy and foreign assistance priority. Senators John Kerry (D-MA), Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and Susan Collins (R-ME) are the primary leads in the Senate, and Congressmen Bill Delahunt (D-MA), Ted Poe (R-TX) and Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) are the primary sponsors in the House. While the bill has strong bipartisan support, time is running out for this Congress to pass the bill. Congress will be returning to Washington, D.C. the week of November 15 and will be here just a few weeks to finish out the current session of Congress. It is imperative that they hear from constituents now that we want them to **pass the I-VAWA before they adjourn.**

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What does the International Violence Against Women Act do?

The I-VAWA elevates the issue of violence against women and girls within the work of the State Department and USAID and improves the effectiveness of existing programs that are often piecemeal and uncoordinated. It requires an intensive, coordinated and holistic effort and demands that programs be transparent and evaluated for effectiveness. Specifically, it would:

- Direct the State Department, in coordination with USAID, to develop a strategy for stopping violence against women and girls. This strategy will be informed by research and best practices, coordinate programs across relevant sectors, and include data collection to assess outcomes and account for any U.S. funding. The strategy will leverage existing U.S. investments and identify potential pilot programs in a few select countries where violence is high and strong indicators for success are present.
- Integrate this issue into relevant U.S. programs so that, for example, programs to build schools include efforts to ensure girls arrive safely and remain safe while at school; service providers working with persons with HIV/AIDS are trained to recognize signs of violence and support women who face violence; officers who train foreign security personnel include instruction on ending violence against women. This holistic approach will help end violence against women and girls, and improve outcomes for U.S. efforts to end global poverty, stop the spread of HIV/AIDS, and stem global insecurity.
- Integrate this concern when the U.S. responds to humanitarian crises so that U.S. efforts take into account, for example, how to protect women and girls who are especially vulnerable to attacks in camps for refugees or internally displaced people or support survivors of sexual violence.
- Instruct USAID and the Department of State to focus on developing and conducting pilot programs over five years in a few select countries that are identified in the comprehensive strategy. The program development and implementation will occur in collaboration with local partners and include data collection that measures outcomes and clearly tracks any U.S. funds.
- Increase transparency and accountability by requiring the Department of State to collect reliable data and report publicly on programmatic impact on reducing violence against women and girls and track any U.S. funds allocated to implement the strategy and programs

3. Who else supports the International Violence Against Women Act?

The I-VAWA was developed over the course of two years with significant input from U.S. and international organizations and institutions. It is now supported by more than 150 organizations that range from human rights to development to faith-based organizations and specific Members ranging from World Vision to CARE to International Rescue Committee. Three organizations co-chair the working group in Washington D.C. advocating for the bill: Family Violence Prevention Fund, Women Thrive Worldwide and Amnesty International.

4. How is violence against women related to human trafficking?

Trafficking of persons is a global human rights problem. Victims are trafficked into a range of forced labor situations including farm work, sweatshops, domestic servitude, and sexual exploitation. Violence against women and girls is one of the underlying issues that contribute to people's vulnerability to being trafficked, and many women face violence as they are trafficked. The I-VAWA would complement existing trafficking efforts by reducing the causes of trafficking and helping enhance the legal response and available services for victims.

5. What about men and boys?

The legislation in no way prevents help or support from going to men and boys. Rather, the I-VAWA recognizes the desperate inequality between men and women in much of the developing world and the violence that contributes to and results from that inequality. In many places, women and girls may still be raped and beaten with impunity and can be sold or simply given away to settle a debt. They can be killed for disobedience or for appearing in public with a man who is not a relative or simply for being born a girl. Many cannot vote, own property or have any rights to their own children. It is this extreme level of violence and abuse women and girls experience *simply because of their gender* that the legislation seeks to address. Importantly, new research also shows that men who are abusive are themselves harmed by their behavior and successful programs to reduce violence against women and girls often also succeed in reducing violence by men against other men or boys.

6. Does the American public support this bill?

Yes. Public opinion research conducted in 2009 showed that Americans overwhelmingly support the I-VAWA even when they are asked if they would support spending significant dollars. Eight in ten voters (82 percent) said they support I-VAWA and this crossed all demographic and party lines. More than 60 percent of voters said addressing global violence should be one of the top priorities for our government. One in four said it should be the top priority. Click [here](#) to read the public opinion research.

What can I do to take action?

There are many ways you can take part in this action, depending on how much time and what resources you have. No action is too small!

If you have 5 minutes or less –

- **Take action online.** Click [here](#) to email your Member of Congress, urging her/him to co-sponsor the I-VAWA and thanking those who have already co-sponsored! Encourage your friends, family and colleagues to take the action!
- **Participate in our social media campaign.** Every week until Congress adjourns we will have a different set of strategic targets to post comments on various social media and blog sites. For further info, check out our plans on page 9.

If you have 10 – 15 minutes –

- **Make a call to your Member(s) of Congress.** This action kit includes a call-in script that you can use to make the calls to your representatives in Congress. This is one of the most effective ways to influence your Congressional delegation and it doesn't take that much time to call your representative and your two senators! Is your Member of Congress already an I-VAWA co-sponsor? [Click here to see an up to date list of co-sponsors](#). If they are, please still call to thank them for their support and encourage them to continue to push for I-VAWA passage.
- **Write a hand-written note to your Member(s) of Congress.** Hand-written notes can garner special attention from Congressional staff. Feel free to use the sample letter included in this action kit as the basis for your letter. *Please note that it can take up to two weeks for a letter to clear security and be delivered to your Congressional representatives so send your letters by November 21, 2010.*
- **Send an email action to your organization's online list.** This action kit includes a sample email action letter and you can use the sample letter to Congress for the actual action template. If possible, schedule your email to your list for the week of November 8th or November 15th to be the most impactful. Feel free to include our short video by [Ashley Judd](#) in your email action, available here: <http://www.passivawa.org/takeAction.html>.

If you have 30 min or more –

- **Write an opinion editorial, letter to the editor or blog post about the I-VAWA.** Samples are included in this packet.
- **Commit to participating in our National Call-in Day on November 17th.** The Pass I-VAWA Coalition will be hosting a National Call-in Day on November 17th. In less than 30 minutes you can call your Congressional delegation's offices and make a real impact on the lives of women and girls globally.

If you have an hour+ or have multiple hands to help, consider –

- **Organize a call-in or letter writing campaign.** Get your friends and relatives to flood the voicemail or mailbox of your Member of Congress. Urge them to co-sponsor the bill and support it when it comes to the floor. Is your Member of Congress already an I-VAWA co-sponsor? [Click here to see an up to date list of co-sponsors](#). If your Member of Congress is a co-sponsor, write and thank them for the support. Sample 'please co-sponsor' and 'thank you' letter templates are included in this packet.
- **Host an organizational phone-bank party.** From November 8th through December 10th (excluding the Thanksgiving holiday), the Pass I-VAWA Coalition will have at least one organization assigned to do phone-banking session each day. We will be seeking volunteers to commit to a particular day. Ready to commit? Email Njambi@endabuse.org.

Note: To find out who your member of Congress is, go to <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/dbq/officials/>.

Timeline

SEQUENCE OF ACTIONS/ TIMELINE:

Week 1: Launch Micro-campaign (Nov. 8 – 12)

- **Blog/Homepage placement** of issue on as many group's websites (*see sample blog in Additional Resources*)
- **General email action** to all Members of Congress asking for support of I-VAWA (*see sample email template in Additional Resources*)
- **Rolling Phone-banking starts.** Each organization is asked to commit to one day during micro-campaign.
- **Social Media action plan begins** (*see Social Media Strategy for more information*)

Week 2: Week of Action (Nov. 15 – 19)

- **Submit Letters to the Editor** in your local papers and online news services (*see sample LTE*)
- **National Call-in Day Wednesday, Nov. 17th** - (*materials will be distributed one week out*)
- **Rolling Phone-banking continues**
- **Social Media action continues.** (*see Social Media Strategy for more information*)

Week 3: Thanksgiving Week (Nov. 22 – 26) (*materials will be distributed two weeks out*)

- **Thanksgiving email action** – This Thanksgiving, give thanks for the great women in your life by taking a second to support the I-VAWA (via email action or Facebook status)
- **Blog/Homepage placement of issue** on group's websites on International Day to End Violence Against Women (Nov. 25th) plugging basic congressional email action
- **Social Media action continues.** (*see Social Media Strategy for more information*)

Week 4: Increase the Noise (Nov. 29 – 3) (*materials will be distributed two weeks out*)

- **Tweet-in** on November 30th
- **Blog/Homepage content** for groups that focus on making calls and tweets
- **Rolling Phone-banking continues**
- **Social Media action continues.** (*see Social Media Strategy for more information*)

Week 5: Final Push (Dec. 6 – 10) (*materials will be distributed two weeks out*)

- **Blog/Homepage content** for groups that focus on International Human Rights Day (Dec. 10th)
- **Rolling Phone-banking continues**
- **Social Media action continues.** (*see Social Media Strategy for more information*)
- **Host an International Human Rights Day luncheon or happy hour.** Celebrate the hard work of your volunteers on I-VAWA passage.

Organizing a Call-in and/ or Letter-Writing Event

What to do:

- You can find time to do these activities either during an already-scheduled event such as an organized group meeting, or class, or you can create a separate event, or both, depending on your capacity.
- If you are doing it during an already scheduled event, take at least 10 minutes during the meeting and ask people to make phone calls and write letters to their Members of Congress. Have mobile phones and cards for writing letters available to make the ask easy. If you think the event's audience will not have the time for calls or letter-writing, consider printing up a letter and having individuals sign it.
- If possible, you should do this in the middle of the event or meeting when you have everyone's attention rather than waiting until the end.
- Provide activists with a script for making phone calls and a sample letter they can follow. We have included a sample script and letter in this Action Kit. Make copies for everyone at your meeting, or for the number of people you estimate will attend your event. You can all call at the same time.
- If you are making phone calls, do not expect to speak directly to your Member of Congress. You will probably be connected with one of their staff members. Leave a message with them as every constituent request **MUST** be taken into account: your message will be passed on to your Member of Congress and **WILL** have an impact!
- If you are writing letters, address them directly to your Member of Congress. Remember to bring stamps so that you can drop them in the mail right after the event. Ideally, try to have letters mailed by November 21st so that they are received before Congress adjourns for the holiday.

Social Media Strategy

SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN

Building on and similar to the coalition's very successful efforts in previous months, this push will have a strong social media component. The effort will be coordinated for maximum impact. Starting November 8, there will be different Members of Congress targeted on different days. The list of targets is below.

Here are some guidelines and sample messages for Facebook and Twitter. Please feel free to change according to your own issues and audience: individualized messages do work better.

Facebook:

Example FB message (to post on organization's FB page):

Help pass the International Violence Against Women Act as it comes up for a vote in Congress this month! Urge Rep. Shelley Capito to support and vote for the bill by leaving a message on her Facebook wall: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Shelley-Moore-Capito/8057864757?ref=ts>

Example FB message (to post on Congressperson's page):

- One out of every three women worldwide will be physically, sexually, or otherwise abused during her lifetime. Support and vote for the International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA) this month!
- Not one more woman, not one more rape. Please vote yes on I VAWA.
- Please be a leader in ending violence against women worldwide. Vote yes on the International Violence Against Women Act.

Twitter:

Please use the hashtag **#I-VAWA**

Example Twitter message:

- Not one more woman, not one more rape. Ask Rep. Connie Mack @conniemackiv to vote for #I-VAWA this month! Pls RT! <http://bit.ly/92i5w8>
- Help end violence against women globally! Ask Rep. Connie Mack @conniemackiv to vote for #I-VAWA this month! Pls RT!

Tweet-a-thon:

On November 30th, make sure to post your twitter message on the passage of IVAWA. We will be asking all activists with twitter accounts to post that day and doing outreach to celebrities and experts. We want to get IVAWA passage to be one of the trending topics that day.

Below is the schedule for the social media action. Please join in when you can and post on Facebook and Twitter for the day's target Member of Congress. You do not have to be a constituent to take this action.

**SOCIAL MEDIA CALENDAR
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2010**

INTERNATIONAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

MONDAY NOVEMBER 8 AND TUESDAY NOVEMBER 9

		Twitter	Facebook
John Kerry (D-MA)	Senate	JohnKerry	www.facebook.com/johnkerry
Howard Berman (D-CA)	House	N/A	www.facebook.com/RepHowardBerman

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 10 AND THURSDAY NOV 11

Richard Lugar		senatorlugar	www.facebook.com/senatorlugar
Ileana Ros Lehtinen		RosLehtinen	www.facebook.com/pages/Ileana-Ros-Lehtinen/6722353315

MONDAY NOVEMBER 15 AND TUESDAY NOVEMBER 16

John Kerry		JohnKerry	www.facebook.com/johnkerry
Bob Corker		SenBobCorker	www.facebook.com/pages/Bob-Corker/20966472424

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 17 AND THURSDAY NOVEMBER 18

Howard Berman		N/A	www.facebook.com/RepHowardBerman
Ileana Ros Lehtinen		RosLehtinen	www.facebook.com/pages/Ileana-Ros-Lehtinen/6722353315

MONDAY NOVEMBER 22 AND TUESDAY NOVEMBER 23

Steny Hoyer		leaderhoyer	www.facebook.com/pages/Steny-Hoyer/7845419973
Dan Burton		danburton	www.facebook.com/pages/Dan-Burton/20437729129

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 24

Bob Corker		SenBobCorker	www.facebook.com/pages/Bob-Corker/20966472424
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MONDAY NOVEMBER 29 AND TUESDAY NOVEMBER 30

Harry Reid		SenatorReid	www.facebook.com/HarryReid
Richard Lugar		senatorlugar	www.facebook.com/senatorlugar

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 1 AND THURSDAY DECEMBER 2

Dana Rohrabacher		DanaRohrabacher	www.facebook.com/pages/DanaRohrabacher/78476240421
Johnny Isakson		teamisakson	www.facebook.com/isakson

MONDAY DECEMBER 6 AND TUESDAY DECEMBER 7

Harry Reid		SenatorReid	www.facebook.com/HarryReid
Steny Hoyer		leaderhoyer	www.facebook.com/pages/Steny-Hoyer/7845419973

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 8 AND THURSDAY DECEMBER 9

Dan Burton		danburton	www.facebook.com/pages/Dan-Burton/20437729129
Ted Poe		JudgeTedPoe	www.facebook.com/pages/Ted-Poe/19740297936

Additional Resources

Ready to get to put your plans together but still have questions?

For more information on I-VAWA:

www.passIVAWA.org

<http://www.amnestyusa.org>

http://endabuse.org/section/programs/public_policy

www.womenthrive.org/ivawainfo

For more information on event planning, media relations, and coalition-building:

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/get-activist-toolkit/plan-events-and-activities/page.do?id=1101318>

Doing an event and looking for a more individualized action to have your attendees take (after they have taken action on IVAWA)? Consider the following:

In August this year, shocking reports emerged of mass rapes in the Walikale territory of the North Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The disturbing reality is that these shocking crimes are only a drop in the ocean of rape and sexual violence committed in the DRC in last decades. Last year alone, it is estimated that 15,000 were raped. This December, the United States will once again assume the Presidency of the United Nations Security Council. Amnesty International is urging Secretary Hillary Clinton to continue to support the International Violence Against Women Act and to lead the Security Council to ensure that the DRC government and the United Nations take urgent measures to protect civilians in the DRC. Order postcards and take action at www.amnestyusa.org/DRC or email africa@aiusa.org to order postcards.

Sample Email Action Letter

Before the 111th Congress Ends, Urge Your Members to Pass the International Violence Against Women Act

No woman or girl deserves to be beaten or raped in the United States or anywhere in the world.

The *International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA)* is the first comprehensive piece of legislation that is aimed at ending violence against women and girls around the world. We need your help to pass it this year!

The groundbreaking legislation ([HR 4594/S 2982](#)) was introduced on February 4 by a bi-partisan team of Senators and Representatives. *I-VAWA* would incorporate efforts to end violence against women and girls into United States foreign policy and foreign aid – for the first time ever. It would direct Administration officials to create a comprehensive five-year plan to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls around the world. It would support the community-based women’s groups that are working at the local level to promote prevention, conduct education programs and help victims of violence.

This legislation would also:

- Address international sex trafficking and rape during war;
- Strengthen laws to stop violence against women and enhance efforts to bring perpetrators to justice;
- Help survivors escape and recover from violence;
- Prevent deaths of women and children who beaten or killed by an abusive partner or rapist;
- Expand economic opportunities for abused women; and
- Educate boys and men to be leaders and allies in ending violence against women and girls.

Violence against women is a human rights violation and a worldwide pandemic - approximately one out of every three women worldwide has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. In some countries it's up to 70 percent. We are asking you to urge your Members of Congress to pass the *I-VAWA* before they adjourn for the year.

Dont' forget, if your Member of Congress is a co-sponsor, thank him/her. For the current list of House and Senate co-sponsors, click here: [House of Representatives](#) or [Senate](#).

XXXYour organizationXXX and the more than 150 groups working to pass *I-VAWA* thank you for your continued commitment to this important issue!

Thank you!

XX Your Organization’s leader on this work XX

Sample Please Co-Sponsor I-VAWA Letter

The Honorable _____

[Insert the District Office Address of your Member of Congress here – find it at

<http://www.congress.org/congressorg/dbq/officials/>]

Dear Representative/Senator (last name),

I am writing to urge you to pass the International Violence Against Women Act (H.R. 4594/S. 2982) in 2010.

Approximately one out of every three women globally will be beaten, raped, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Rates of domestic violence are up to 70 percent in some countries, and every day women and girls are forced to trade sex for food or school fees. All too often, these violent crimes are not prosecuted and worse still, they become socially accepted and tolerated. Violence against women is a global health crisis and human rights violation that contributes to instability and insecurity throughout our world.

Support from the American public is strong. A 2009 poll found that 61 percent of voters across demographic and political lines thought global violence against women should be one of the top international priorities for the U.S. government, and 82 percent supported the I-VAWA legislation.

I am asking you, as my Representative/Senator, to help pass the International Violence Against Women Act and take action to end the abuse.

The International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA) supports innovative programs which have been shown to effectively decrease acts of violence. Many of these programs help women and girls do things we so often take for granted: go to school, earn an income to take care of their families, collect food or water without fear of rape and bring perpetrators of abuse to justice. I-VAWA will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of existing US foreign policy to end violence against women and enhance our ability to stop the suffering.

In a world where tensions and violence within communities can jeopardize national and international security, it is critical that the United States take action to end atrocities committed against women and girls in their homes and in their communities, during times of peace and times of conflict.

The International Violence Against Women Act provides the United States with an opportunity to effectively address this problem and stop the violence around the world. When implemented, this important piece of legislation will help an end to the fear, pain and suffering experienced by hundreds of millions of women and girls globally.

Please make a difference in the lives of millions of women and girls – **pass I-VAWA now!**

Yours sincerely,

(Your name and address)Or ask other group members and constituents to add their names and address to one letter.****

Sample Thank You for Co-Sponsoring I-VAWA Letter

The Honorable _____

[Insert the District Office Address of your Member of Congress here – find it at

<http://www.congress.org/congressorg/dbq/officials/>]

Dear (insert Representative/Senator's name),

I am writing to thank you for demonstrating your commitment to ending abuses against women and girls globally by co-sponsoring the International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA) (H.R. 4594/S. 2982) and to ask you to help pass I-VAWA in 2010!

When implemented, this important piece of legislation will help put an end to the fear, pain and suffering experienced by hundreds of millions of women and girls all around the world. Every day women and girls are forced to trade sex for food or school fees. All too often these violent crimes are not prosecuted and, worse still, they become socially accepted and tolerated. **Thank you for taking a stand by co-sponsoring a bill that will show the world that the United States refuses to tolerate violence against women anywhere.**

As you know, the International Violence Against Women Act supports innovative programs to help victims, hold perpetrators accountable, and prevent violence. We are grateful to you for supporting such this comprehensive piece of legislation that will have a significant impact on ending to violence against women globally. Thank you for taking action. **We look forward to your continued support to help pass I-VAWA in 2010!**

Yours sincerely,

(Your name and address)Or ask other group members and constituents to add their names and address to one letter.****

Sample Op-ed for a Newspaper

Not One More

By X and X

Violence against women is a costly and devastating worldwide crisis – and this month, Congress will have the chance to do something about it.

Every day, atrocities are committed against women and girls all around the world. This terror takes many forms. Women are beaten and murdered by their husbands, children are trafficked for sex, and teenagers are caned or punished because they were raped. Girls are sexually assaulted when they seek food in refugee camps, brides are burned for dowries that are too small, and women are murdered because they supposedly dishonored their families.

The consequences of this violence are far-reaching and grim. Victims are at risk for a host of health problems, including HIV/AIDS. Many are unable to have healthy babies, or care for and support their families. Fear spreads through communities, girls cannot go to school and women cannot hold jobs. The result is poverty and instability.

This isn't an isolated or occasional problem; it happens across the globe every single day. In fact, the United Nations reports that one in three women worldwide will be beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in their lives. This is a gross violation of human rights, and an intolerable moral outrage.

But there is something we can do about it. We can urge Members to pass the *International Violence Against Women Act* – legislation that would, for the first time, make stopping violence against women and girls a priority in U.S. diplomacy and foreign aid.

This legislation has the potential to make the world safer, to promote economic stability so families can prosper, and to support peace and development worldwide. Most immediately, its passage would mean the U.S. does more to stop violence in places like Haiti, which is recovering from natural disaster, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where rape against women and girls has become a routine and appalling weapon of war.

A bi-partisan group of lawmakers is championing the *International Violence Against Women Act*, including Senators John Kerry (D-MA), Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Susan Collins (R-ME), as well as Representatives Bill Delahunt (D-MA), Ted Poe (R-TX) and Janice Schakowsky (D-IL). We are proud that [list cosponsors from your state or market] have signed onto the bill. And we are urging [list target senators and/or representatives] to sponsor it as well.

Specifically, the *International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA)* would address international sex trafficking and rape during war; reform laws about violence against women and enhance efforts to bring perpetrators to justice; help survivors escape and recover from violence; prevent deaths from HIV/AIDS and childbirth; expand economic opportunities for women; and educate boys and men to be leaders and allies of ending violence against women and girls.

There is broad support for this legislation. A poll conducted last year for the Family Violence Prevention Fund and Women Thrive Worldwide found that 61 percent of voters said addressing global violence should be one of our government's top priorities. Majorities believe working to end violence against women and girls will lead to greater economic and political stability worldwide. Voters want our government to help end violence against women and girls because they see it as an appalling human rights violation, a dangerous public health epidemic, an often-irreversible path to poverty, and a hideous tactic of war. They see passing the *International Violence*

Against Women Act as a step in the right direction.

They are right. That's why this legislation has such strong support from a broad-based coalition of leading international and domestic women's, violence prevention, human rights and development organizations including [your organization].

It's time to take a stand and say we don't want to live in a world in which violence against women and girls is an everyday occurrence. It's time – past time – to say: Not one more rape, not one more sexual assault, not one woman or girl sacrificed to violence. Not one more day's delay in passing the *International Violence Against Women Act*.

[*Describe the authors – name and affiliation with organization.*] More information on the *International Violence Against Women Act* is available at www.PassIVAWA.org.

Sample Letter to the Editor on I-VAWA

To the Editor:

One in three. The United Nations says that's how many women worldwide who will be beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in their lives. Every day, we read about examples – women and girls from Guatemala to Darfur to Albania to Afghanistan to Haiti who experience rape, domestic violence, trafficking, and other violence.

It's a grim reality, but a reality we can change. Just before Congress adjourned for the elections, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was set to vote on the bi-partisan *International Violence Against Women Act*. This legislation would, for the first time, make stopping violence against women and girls a priority in American diplomacy and foreign aid. It would support programs that prevent and respond to violence, help survivors, and hold perpetrators accountable. And it would help women and girls worldwide go to school, earn an income, feed their families, and seek medical care.

Violence against women and girls is an appalling violation of basic human rights. We can help end it. Let's ask Congress to take a stand and say: Not one more rape, not one more assault, not one more victim. It's time to end violence against women and girls. It's time to pass the *International Violence Against Women Act*.

Sincerely,

[Your Name, Title, Agency]

[Address]

[Phone Number]

Sample Blog Post

(Feel free to use this as a starting point, but a blog post needs to be written in your own voice!)

Help Stop Violence Against Women Worldwide

By [Your Name]

Members of Congress have a unique opportunity to stop violence against women around the world. They can pass the International Violence Against Women Act before they adjourn for the year!

The I-VAWA, which was introduced in the House and Senate in the 111th Congress, presents a critical opportunity for the United States to protect, defend, and empower the world's women. It is a comprehensive piece of legislation that will integrate violence prevention in US foreign policy and support innovative programs that have been shown to effectively reduce violence against women and girls.

For many of us, recent reports on international violence against women seem distant and incomprehensible. On any given day, horrifying stories about such violence appear in the news: the systematic rape of women in the Democratic Republic of Congo, increasing assaults on women and girls in Afghanistan, violence against women and girls in Haiti whose lives are already devastated by the earthquake. Sadly, this violence is not isolated to a few women in a few places. In fact, approximately one out of three women worldwide has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime with rates of domestic violence reaching 70 percent in some countries. No country is immune – the violence crosses all borders and affects women of all ages, social groups, religions and classes.

The United States Congress now has an opportunity to address these horrifying abuses. Senators Kerry (D-MA), Boxer (D-CA), Collins (R-ME) and Snowe (R-ME) and Congressman Delahunt (D-MA), Schakowsky (D-IL) and Congressman Poe (R-TX) introduced the International Violence Against Women Act, landmark legislation that can have a real impact for women all over the world, earlier this year.

Congress should move quickly to make the I-VAWA law and pass I-VAWA before they adjourn for the year.

In a world where tensions and violence within communities can jeopardize national and international security, it is critical that the United States take action to end atrocities committed against women and girls in their homes and in their communities, during times of peace and times of conflict.

Violence takes the lives of millions of women and girls, and denies countless others their dignity and the chance to live safe, productive lives. Constituents now have the opportunity to let lawmakers know they want more to be done to address violence against women globally they can take action to end the suffering by urging their Members of Congress to pass I-VAWA. Click here [I-VAWA online action](#) for a link to email your Member of Congress, urging them to co-sponsor the I-VAWA and thanking those who have already co-sponsored!

[Add a one-sentence description of the author.]

Sample Telephone Script

Find out the number of your Member of Congress at <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/dbq/officials/>]

- 1.) Telephone calls are usually taken by a staff member. Ask to speak with the aide who handles women's issues or foreign affairs issues.
- 2.) After identifying yourself as a constituent, tell the staffer that you would like to leave a brief message.

“Please tell Representative/Senator [REDACTED] that I support the International Violence Against Women Act.”

- 3.) Ask for the position of your Member of Congress on the bill. If they are a co-sponsor thank them for their support and urge them to help pass I-VAWA in 2010.
- 4.) If not leave a message saying:

“Please urge the Member of Congress to co-sponsor the bill and help pass I-VAWA in 2010.”

- 5.) And add:

“I support the bill because:

- **Violence against women and girls is a human rights violation occurring globally.**
- **At least one in every three women globally has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime.**
- **The International Violence Against Women Act supports measures to prevent violence, protect survivors and bring perpetrators to justice.**

You may request a written response to your telephone call. Let us know if the Congressional staffer shares any pertinent information with you by emailing Njambi@endabuse.org.

Talking Points

November 2010

Right now, we have the chance to make a difference for hundreds of millions of women and girls worldwide who are at grave risk for domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, trafficking and other egregious human rights violations. During the final weeks of this Congress, we urge Senators and Members of Congress to pass the *International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA)* – critically important legislation that would, for the first time, make stopping violence against women and girls a priority in American diplomacy and foreign assistance. If it passes, the U.S. would do more to prevent women from being beaten and killed by their husbands, children from being trafficked for sex, teenagers from being burned with acid for going to school, girls from being forced to trade sex for food in refugee camps. *I-VAWA* would make a huge difference for women and girls who are at risk right now in Haiti, Afghanistan, Darfur, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and elsewhere.

- No woman or girl ever deserves to be beaten or raped. Yet, one in three of the world's women will experience violence or abuse. In some countries, more than 70 percent of women are hurt or even killed because of their gender.
- Violence against women globally also impacts our own national security. Places that violently hurt women and prohibit them from participating in society are more unstable, and this instability often creates a safe harbor for extremists.
- Americans are gravely concerned about this violence, at home and around the world. 61 percent of voters say addressing global violence against women and girls should be one of the top priorities for our government. One in four says it should be the top priority.
- The *I-VAWA* is bi-partisan, groundbreaking legislation that offers solutions. It would for the first time, make stopping violence against women and girls a priority in our relationships with other countries and in the aid we give them.
- *I-VAWA* would support proven programs that help girls stay in school, support survivors, engage men and boys in helping change social norms and attitudes, and hold perpetrators accountable. Importantly, it would fund local women's and community groups that are courageously doing this work so they can solve problems in their own communities.

This is our best chance in years to pass this legislation, but we need to act now. Urge your Senators and Representatives to pass the *I-VAWA* before Congress adjourns for the year!