



April 2, 2019

The Honorable Karen Bass
2059 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
514 Cannon House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Bass and Fitzpatrick:

On behalf of the 131,400 members of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), I am pleased to express our support for your legislation, HR 1585, to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). We are the nation's largest primary care organization representing the nation's family physicians and the millions of patients for whom we provide care. Our members are acutely aware of the societal and public health problems caused by domestic violence.

During the past twenty years, there has been a growing recognition among health care professionals that lifetime exposure to violence and abuse is a highly prevalent public health problem. Research on the impact of adult intimate partner violence (IPV) finds that victims of domestic violence are at increased risk for heart disease, obesity, stroke, hypertension, cervical cancer, chronic pain including arthritis, neck and back pain, and asthma. IPV also contributes to mental health conditions including depression and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and contributes to risky health behaviors such as smoking, alcohol and substance abuse.

We are pleased that your legislation reauthorizing VAWA continues the authorization of the Violence Against Women Health program. This important initiative administered by HHS' Office of Women's Health trains health care providers and strengthens collaborations between public health and domestic violence agencies to better identify and serve victims of violence.

We are pleased to support your legislation and look forward to working with you to improve health care for all Americans. If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact Mark Cribben at 202/655-4911 or MCribben@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

Michael Munger, MD, FAAFP
AAFP Board Chair

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