

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 126

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED AUGUST 10, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator TROY SINGLETON

District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Urges Congress to reauthorize “Violence Against Women Act.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



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1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** urging Congress to reauthorize the
2 “Violence Against Women Act.”
3
4 **WHEREAS**, “The Violence against Women Act” of 1994
5 (Pub.L.103-322) (VAWA) was the first federal enactment
6 recognizing domestic violence and sexual assault as crimes; and
7 **WHEREAS**, The 1994 law provided \$1.6 billion in federal resources
8 to encourage community-coordinated responses to combat
9 violence by enhancing the ability of states to investigate and
10 prosecute violent crimes perpetrated against women, requiring
11 the imposition of automatic and mandatory restitution on those
12 convicted of these crimes, permitting the federal prosecution of
13 interstate domestic violence and sexual assault cases and the
14 enforcement of interstate protection orders, and allowing for
15 civil redress in cases that prosecutors chose not to prosecute; and
16 **WHEREAS**, The VAWA was reauthorized in 2000, improving the
17 foundation of the original law by creating a legal assistance
18 program for victims of violent crimes and expanding the
19 definition of crime to include dating violence and stalking; and
20 **WHEREAS**, A subsequent reauthorization of the VAWA in 2005
21 developed culturally and linguistically-specific criminal, civil
22 justice, and community-based programs geared to meet the
23 emerging needs of ethnic populations across the nation, have
24 dramatically increased the ability of federal, state, and local
25 governmental agencies and victim services organizations to
26 provide critical services to support women in their struggle to
27 overcome abusive situations; and
28 **WHEREAS**, The VAWA continues to support comprehensive and
29 cost- effective responses to the crimes of domestic violence,
30 sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking on the federal, State,
31 and local levels; and
32 **WHEREAS**, The VAWA encourages collaboration among law
33 enforcement agencies, the courts, attorneys, and victim services
34 organizations by creating a leadership role for the federal
35 government that has motivated state, local, and tribal
36 governments to improve responses to victims and perpetrators of
37 these crimes; and
38 **WHEREAS**, The law also establishes new federal crimes of domestic
39 violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and defines those
40 crimes to fill in jurisdictional gaps in the way the crimes are
41 prosecuted; identifies best practices in the way governmental
42 entities and victim services organizations respond to victims and
43 perpetrators of violent crimes; and focuses on the needs of
44 underserved communities such as immigrant, Native American,
45 gay and transgendered, and prison populations; and
46 **WHEREAS**, As a result of the VAWA's enactment, more than 660
47 new state laws have been enacted to combat domestic violence,
48 sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, including making

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1 stalking a crime and upgrading the criminal penalties for date or
2 spousal rape; additionally, more victims are reporting acts of
3 violence and receiving services that help them move from crisis
4 to stability, and the criminal justice system has improved its
5 ability to keep victims safe and hold perpetrators responsible for
6 their actions; and

7 **WHEREAS**, The VAWA not only helps to improve the lives of crime
8 victims but saves money as well; a 2002 study found that the law
9 saved taxpayers approximately \$14.8 billion in net averted social
10 costs in its first six years of existence; and

11 **WHEREAS**, The current reauthorization of the VAWA expired on
12 February 15, 2019; and

13 **WHEREAS**, The reauthorization bill, H.R. 1585, introduced by
14 Representative Karen Bass (California), would: enhance judicial
15 and law enforcement tools through the use of STOP grants;
16 develop and enforce firearm surrender policies and expand
17 firearm laws prohibiting persons convicted of certain crimes
18 from possessing firearms; expand programs focused on
19 increasing legal assistance for dependent children of survivors of
20 sexual assault or domestic violence; provide services for young
21 victims of violence and bullying; reauthorize and update
22 programs reducing dating violence, helping children exposed to
23 violence, and engaging men in preventing violence; expand
24 housing protections and provide economic security assistance for
25 survivors of sexual assault or domestic violence; protect Native
26 American women, by including provisions to improve the
27 response to missing and murdered Native American women; and
28 safeguard the Office on Violence Against Women in the
29 Department of Justice; and

30 **WHEREAS**, Since 1994, the VAWA has broken new ground in
31 federal, state, tribal, and local responses to domestic violence,
32 sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, and each
33 reauthorization has been renewed with near unanimous support;
34 and

35 **WHEREAS**, The United States Congress is urged to reauthorize the
36 VAWA to allow the act's programs to continue to impact the way
37 law enforcement agencies, courts, legal professionals, and victim
38 services organizations respond to, and meet the needs of, victims of
39 domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking,
40 while holding perpetrators responsible for their actions, and to
41 provide additional protections for victims of these crimes; now,
42 therefore,

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44 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Senate of the State of New Jersey (the
45 General Assembly concurring):

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47 1. The United States Congress is urged to reauthorize the
48 "Violence Against Women Act" (VAWA) to allow the VAWA's

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1 programs to continue to impact the way law enforcement agencies,
2 the courts, legal professionals, and victim services organizations
3 respond to, and meet the needs of, victims of domestic violence,
4 dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, while holding
5 perpetrators responsible for their actions, and to provide additional
6 protections for victims of these crimes.

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8 2. Duly authenticated copies of this resolution, as filed with the
9 Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General
10 Assembly or the Secretary of the State to the President of the
11 United States, the Office on Violence Against Women in the United
12 States Department of Justice, and every member of the New Jersey
13 Congressional delegation.

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STATEMENT

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18 This concurrent resolution urges the United States Congress to
19 reauthorize the “Violence Against Women Act” (VAWA) to allow
20 the VAWA's programs to continue to impact the way law
21 enforcement agencies, the courts, legal professionals, and victim
22 services organizations respond to, and meet the needs of, victims of
23 domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking,
24 while holding perpetrators responsible for their actions, and to
25 provide additional protections for victims of these crimes.