

# U.S. Rep. Moore: Statement on House passage of reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act

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“As a survivor of domestic violence, I made it my personal mission in Congress to uplift and empower survivors. I am proud to co-lead on the Violence Against Women’s Act Reauthorization as I know firsthand that these programs can be the difference between life and death.

Domestic violence cases increased during the pandemic. For many survivors, staying at home did not mean safer at home and left many of them isolated and trapped with their abuser at a seriously vulnerable time. This legislation comes at a time when survivors need it most.

When I led the 2013 VAWA reauthorization, I worked across the aisle to ensure that the federal government upheld their trust responsibility to expand Tribal jurisdiction in domestic violence cases. This reauthorization would further expand the Tribal special domestic violence jurisdiction to include sexual violence, dating violence, stalking, and more. This is a critical step in holding non-tribal members accountable in the perpetration of crimes against American Indian and Alaskan Native women who experience violence at disproportionately higher rates.

This legislation recognizes the potential for dangerous consequences when an abuser owns a gun. As the lead author of the Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention Act, I recognize the need to help ensure guns don’t make these situations even worse. I am thankful that the bill would end the boyfriend loophole, ensuring that our laws no longer allow abusive dating partners to have access to guns.

I am also proud to see both of my amendments approved by the House. One amendment would authorize a study to examine the link between cases of intimate partner violence and maternal mortality and morbidity. I am proud to work with the cochairs of the Black Maternal Health Caucus and authors of the Momnibus legislation, Rep. Lauren Underwood and Rep. Alma Adams, on this critical amendment.

I also authored a successful amendment to the bill that would authorize and expand the Forensic-Medical and Advocacy Services for Tribes (FAST) Program that provides grant funds to establish programs that offer sexual assault medical forensic exams and victim services in tribal communities. Those already part of the successful FAST pilot program, like the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee, are working to increase access to medical forensic care and provide training to health care providers and victim advocates.

I am so honored to stand with my colleagues in introducing and passing this essential bill to support and protect survivors and their children. I look forward to working with our Senate colleagues to get this measure enacted into law," said **Congresswoman Moore**.

"All forms of violence and oppression are interconnected. At the intersection of domestic violence and racial inequities, the criminal legal system often fails victims and survivors of domestic violence," said **Gricel Santiago-Rivera, Executive Director at End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin**. "We are grateful that the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 includes a new focus on survivors autonomy, agency, and safety, including restorative justice practices and, importantly, much needed investments in responses to violence that go beyond the criminal legal system."

"We applaud the House passing H.R. 1620, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) today. This bill contains critical improvements for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), such as expanding tribal sovereignty for prosecuting non-Native sexual assault offenders and making critical investments in culturally specific services," said **Pennie Meyers, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA)**. "H.R. 1620 also makes significant investments in sexual violence prevention, and we are so appreciative of Representative Moore for her leadership on VAWA. We hope the Senate will follow suit and quickly pass this legislation."