

U.S. Reps. Moore, McBath, Young, and Katko: Reintroduce Bipartisan Legislation to Support Survivors of Domestic Violence

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Today, Representatives Gwen Moore (D-WI-04), Lucy McBath (D-GA-06), Don Young (R-AK-At Large), and John Katko (R-NY-24) reintroduce the bipartisan Family Violence Prevention and Services Improvement Act (FVPSA). The bill will reauthorize and expand funding for programs focused on protecting survivors and preventing family and domestic violence, and is the only federal funding source under the Department of Health and Human Services dedicated to providing domestic violence prevention services. Congresswoman Moore released the following statement:

“Survivors of domestic violence trying to build a new life for themselves need resources that will keep them and their children safe. This legislation has provided stability to survivors for years, and I am honored to join my colleagues in building upon this bill to increase violence prevention efforts, support tribal sovereignty, and reach communities of color with culturally competent programs,” **said Moore.**

“A heartbreaking mark of this pandemic has been the increase in domestic and family violence that continues to affect Americans across the country. We must do all we can to keep children and families safe through this pandemic and in the future,” **McBath said.** “With this bill, we are working hand in hand with state, local, and tribal leadership to assist organizations in the funding process as they continue their vital work. I’m grateful to my Republican and Democratic colleagues for joining

me once again to help prevent violence, protect families, and care for survivors of domestic abuse.”

“Too many families in Alaska and across the country face domestic violence. Tragically, as we spend more time at home, domestic violence rates have only increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. We must be doing all that we can to prevent domestic violence and provide survivors with the support necessary to live safe, abuse-free lives. I am very proud to join Representatives McBath, Moore, and Katko to introduce the Family Violence Prevention and Services Improvement Act. This is an important bill, and it comes at a critical time. Through this legislation, we can better partner with state, local, and tribal organizations to support the work of countless advocates who are making a difference for survivors and their families every day. Our bill also takes crucial steps to ensure that our domestic violence prevention programs are properly-tailored and culturally specific. This is especially important for our state’s Alaska Native communities, which face disproportionate levels of crime against women and girls. It is my great hope that through this bill, we can turn the tide in the fight against domestic violence, and send a message of hope to survivors everywhere. I respectfully ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to cosponsor our legislation, and help us get it across the finish line,” **said Young.**

“Since it was first authorized in 1984, the bipartisan Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) has played a vital role in supporting survivors of domestic violence and their children. In my district in Central New York, I’ve heard firsthand how important FVPSA is to keeping families safe and ensuring they have access to emergency resources. By reauthorizing this important program, we will ensure local, state, and tribal governments, as well as critical service providers in our communities, have the resources necessary to prevent violence and provide essential protection and support services to survivors,” **said Katko.**

“As the largest network of domestic and sexual violence service providers, YWCA sees first-hand the toll of gender-based violence on women and marginalized communities and the recent increased demand on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic,” **said Elisha Rhodes, Interim Chief Executive Officer at YWCA USA.** “YWCA is pleased to see the introduction of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) that includes an increase in funds to support services on the ground as well as additional assistance for community prevention and culturally specific programs. We urge Congress to pass this critical legislation without delay and ensure survivors and their families continue to receive the emergency shelter,

transitional housing, crisis hotline, counseling, court assistance, and other community and safety programs needed to survive.”

The *Family Violence Prevention and Services Improvement Act* expands resources for survivors and initiatives to end domestic violence by:

- **Increases the funding authorization level to \$253 million** to respond to very low per-program funding levels and provide access to FVPSA funds for programs not currently funded.
- **Expanding support for and access to culturally-specific programs.**
 - Culturally-specific organizations are better equipped to address the complex, multi-layered challenges facing victims from racial and ethnic minority populations as they seek services and protections from abuse.
 - Culturally-specific programs often have challenges accessing FVPSA funding at the state and local levels due to the limited funding available and robust competition. This bill authorizes a new culturally-specific program to address these needs and incorporates related funding into the formula itself.
- **Strengthening the capacity of Indian Tribes to exercise their sovereign authority** to more fully respond to domestic violence in their communities and authorizes funding for tribal coalitions and the Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center.
- **Meaningfully investing in prevention.** Brings evidence-informed, community-based prevention initiatives to more communities.
- **Strengthening and updating the National Domestic Violence Hotline and hotline services for underrepresented populations,** including American Indians, Alaskan Natives and Deaf victims of domestic and dating violence.
- **Creating a new underserved populations grant program.**
 - The lack of resources and severity of violence is often heightened for survivors living at the margins, such as those living in rural communities, individuals with disabilities, older adults, those identifying with faith-based communities, youth and others. These underserved populations are often reluctant to seek assistance, and when they do, they frequently look for services and support in their immediate communities. This bill creates a grant program for family centers, youth centers, senior centers, community-based organizations or vocational organizations to meet the needs of these survivors.

- **Continuing to support national technical assistance (TA) centers, including the Alaskan Native Tribal Resource Center on Domestic Violence**, and their work to develop effective policy, practice, research and cross-system collaborations.
- **Updating provisions and definitions** to ensure access to services for all survivors, better align with related programs and reflect evolving practices in order to provide uniform guidance to those working to end domestic violence.
 - Updates language to reflect current practices and provide a reference to other statutes to ensure common understanding across different federal programs.