

Because of their status, immigrants are often scared to report crimes of violence. This fear results in more damage to their communities as the violence escalates. But law enforcement has the powerful tool to combat these crimes—the U visa program, which protects immigrants if they report abuse.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT REAUTHORIZATION

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, during my first term in Congress, I proudly voted for the Violence Against Women Act. It saddens me that 20 years later, in my last term, my Republican colleagues are determined to water down and undermine this landmark legislation. Of all things that shouldn't be partisan, this is it—the need to help those who suffer injuries at the hands of someone who supposedly loves them.

As we've seen many times, the majority seems to like playing politics with women's health and safety. And because they rarely miss an opportunity to exclude LGBT Americans from important rights and benefits, they're saying that if you're a woman who is in a relationship with another woman, then you don't deserve the same protection against domestic abuse or sexual assault.

We need to be doing more, not less on this issue. I have a bill that would extend family-leave benefits to victims of domestic violence. It's H.R. 3151. Why don't we take up that bill instead of this divisive measure that rolls back historic progress?

Vote 'no' on H.R. 4970.

VOTE "NO" ON H.R. 4970, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2012

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 4970, this misguided GOP reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

Unfortunately, this bill does not do enough to protect the well-being of all women. I say again that it does not do enough to protect the well-being of all women.

This reauthorization jeopardizes the safety of our Native American women and also the safety of many undocumented women. Neither the manager's amendment nor the underlying bill addresses the problems that face Indian country. Instead of empowering tribal police and courts to stop domestic violence, this legislation unfairly places the burden on Native victims. Many of the victims of domestic violence that live on the reservations are unable to hire legal counsel and can't travel hundreds of miles to Federal courts to petition for protection orders.

We must protect sovereignty. We must respect sovereignty. Tribal courts are the best authorities to issue domestic violence orders of protection on reservations.

Let's stop this partisan bill. Let's work together on a new approach that values the safety of Native Americans and undocumented individuals in a bipartisan fashion.

WE STILL HAVE WORK TO DO

(Ms. BONAMICI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, it's truly unfortunate that we're here today talking about the possibility of voting against the Violence Against Women Act. This bill was originally passed and has been consistently reauthorized with strong bipartisan support, but it now faces unnecessary hurdles.

There has been a drop in annual rates of domestic violence since the passage of the Violence Against Women Act, but we still have work to do. Alarmingly, one in four women and one in seven men have been victims of domestic violence in their lifetime, but the current bill is not the way to move forward.

Unlike the companion bill that passed in the Senate with strong bipartisan support, this House bill will take us backwards. It eliminates protections for immigrants dependent on and exploited by their spouses, keeping them trapped in violent relationships. It could let perpetrators of sexual violence against Native American women off the hook, and it utterly fails to recognize that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, including those in same-sex relationships.

Every time we reauthorize an act of Congress, we have an opportunity to improve. Improvement, not further harming victims, should be our focus with the reauthorization.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT

(Ms. BORDALLO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 4970, the so-called Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. I believe that all Americans are entitled to feel safe, and we must strengthen current laws to continue to protect women and children across our country. This bill, however, does not achieve that goal. Immigrants, native tribes, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender groups are some of our most vulnerable communities, and the bill rolls back years of progress improving Federal efforts against domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

The bill eliminates important confidentiality protections for self-petitions and would put immigrant women

at greater risk for repeat abuses by undermining the intent of U visas. This bill discourages crime victims from cooperating with law enforcement and eliminates any attempt at a stable life by terminating their eligibility for permanent residence.

Women in this country, regardless of their background, should never have to feel trapped or helpless.

A SHAMEFUL BILL

(Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I never could have anticipated speaking in opposition to the Violence Against Women Act, and it's unfortunate that we've come to this point, but here we are. This comes after more than a year of bipartisan efforts to put together a comprehensive, effective, and much-needed VAWA draft. But Republicans in the Senate and then in the House decided to ignore the recommendations of the FBI, the Department of Justice, and advocacy groups on the ground and push a version of VAWA that endangers immigrant women and children, ignores the needs of our native communities, and perpetuates discrimination against LGBT victims. That is why hundreds of victim services organizations oppose this bill, and I stand with them today.

At the Women in Distress shelter in my district, there has been a 39 percent increase in requests for services over the last year. Women need us now more than ever, and this is not the time to allow for discrimination or helping only some victims of domestic violence. This is the time to take a stand.

As lawmakers, we speak for the voiceless, and today I speak united with my colleagues in opposition to this shameful bill.

I STAND WITH VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

(Ms. WATERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, today I stand with my Democratic colleagues and victims of domestic violence across our Nation in strong opposition to H.R. 4970, the House Republican alternative to the Violence Against Women Reauthorization bill. This bill severely undermines vital protections available to victims of violence and places those victims in danger of continued abuse.

Since its enactment in 1994, the Violence Against Women Act, known as VAWA, has a long history of uniting lawmakers with the common purpose of protecting survivors of domestic violence.

Each year across the Nation, thousands of women, children, and men who fall victim to domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking no longer

have to live in fear because of important victim protections under this law.

This Republican alternative bill threatens to dismantle this progress by deliberately placing domestic violence victims from LGBT, immigrant, tribal, and other marginalized communities in harm's way.

□ 1230

REPUBLICAN BILL ENDANGERS WOMEN

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. I rise today to oppose H.R. 4970. Under current law, a woman who is married to a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident and is a victim of spousal abuse can file a self-petition for legal permanent residency in order to leave that abusive relationship.

This provision has helped women like Maria, whose husband physically abused her and threatened to kill her two children. Without his knowledge, she started a VAWA self-petition process, meeting with an attorney at the laundromat on her usual laundry day and hiding her paperwork.

What this bill does is exposes women like Maria. It strips confidentiality protections and allows government officials to contact the spouse. Why would we do that? For these women, tipping off abusive spouses is nothing short of putting them in harm's way. It's a shame.

It's a shame that this so-called Violence Against Women bill could actually cause violence to women. Mr. Speaker, this bill is outright dangerous, and I urge my colleagues to say "no."

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4970, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2012, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4310, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 656 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. Res. 656

Resolved, That upon the adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4970) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill, modified by the amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amend-

ed, and any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. At any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4310) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Armed Services. After general debate, the Committee of the Whole shall rise without motion. No further consideration of the bill shall be in order except pursuant to a subsequent order of the House.

POINT OF ORDER

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I raise a point of order against H. Res. 656 because the resolution violates section 426(a) of the Congressional Budget Act. The resolution contains a waiver of all points of order against consideration of the bill, which includes a waiver of section 425 of the Congressional Budget Act, which causes a violation of section 426(a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Wisconsin makes a point of order that the resolution violates section 426(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

The gentlewoman has met the threshold burden under the rule, and the gentlewoman from Wisconsin and a Member opposed each will control 10 minutes of debate on the question of consideration.

Following debate, the Chair will put the question of consideration as the statutory means of disposing of the point of order.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Wisconsin.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I raise this point of order not necessarily out of concern for unfunded mandates, although there are some unfunded mandates in the underlying bill, H.R. 4970; rather, I am here today because this is the only opportunity to voice opposition to this bill, given the strict, closed terms of our debate today.

It is baffling to me, Mr. Speaker, that we would be so shut out of today's debate and that House Republicans would so completely abandon any pretense of bipartisanship on a bill like the Violence Against Women Act. This bill has always been a bipartisan effort, and I would argue that on an issue like this, it is incredibly important to have a well-rounded discussion.

We obviously disagree about the key elements that are critical to include in a Violence Against Women Act reauthorization. Well, why not allow us to have a healthy debate? More importantly, Mr. Speaker, why not allow us

our chance to try to improve the legislation before us?

Our allies in the domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy community have literally spent years compiling input and data from service providers, law enforcement, and victims themselves about what we must do to update VAWA in a reauthorization. And I am here to be a voice of protest because their input is invaluable; yet, for the very first time, their input has been cast aside.

Last night I offered a substitute, along with Representative CONYERS and Representative LOFGREN, that would have allowed us to consider the Senate-passed version of the Violence Against Women Act, a version which I proudly introduced in March here in this House of Representatives. This legislation was passed in the Senate with sound bipartisan support and includes the improvements that have been endorsed by a broad array of individuals and organizations, including law enforcement agencies.

But, unfortunately, today we will not be allowed to vote on the Senate bill. We will have to vote on the Adams bill, which is now officially opposed by over 325 organizations. Yes, Mr. Speaker, you heard it right—325 organizations.

I would like to share my time with my colleagues who are here with me today and would like for their voices to be heard. So, Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I am going to yield to a number of Members for unanimous consent, the first of whom is Ms. YVETTE CLARKE from Brooklyn, New York.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to submit my remarks in opposition to a Republican bill that weakens protections for violence against women and in support of the bipartisan Senate bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in vehement opposition to H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012 (VAWA). This egregious bill is another example of this Republican-led Congress waging political warfare on women.

H.R. 4970 would roll back years of progress and bipartisan commitment on the part of Congress to protect vulnerable immigrant victims of domestic violence, stalking, sex crimes, other serious crimes, and trafficking. Choosing one type of victim over the other.

Mr. Speaker, this will greatly impact areas with heavy concentrations of immigrants, which includes my district and other residents of New York City. Historically, NYC has been the beacon of immigration. Many in Congress, including Republicans, can trace their ancestry back to the immigrant population of NYC.

These new punitive measures within H.R. 4970 that hinder abused immigrants' ability to seek justice against their abusers, are a grave set of circumstances that will have future implications on the safety and security of our country.