

## VAWA 2018 Reauthorization Update

*Statement from our Senior Director of Public Policy, Rosie Hidalgo*

October 4, 2018 — When the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was last reauthorized in 2013, Congress extended funding for the VAWA grant programs for a five year period, until *September 30, 2018*. Congress has yet to reauthorize VAWA, despite significant advocacy efforts during this past year. Nonetheless, VAWA did not expire on September 30th. **It is important to note that many important provisions of VAWA, including remedies for immigrant victims, special tribal criminal jurisdiction, housing protections, nondiscrimination provisions, and other similar provisions do not require reauthorization and do not expire, since they are not tied to specific funding.** Those aspects of the law continue unchanged unless Congress specifically changes those provisions through subsequent legislation. Only the VAWA grant programs and their funding levels require reauthorization.

Stakeholders and communities across the country continue to urge Congress to reauthorize VAWA for another five-year period, including targeted fixes and modest enhancements to the current VAWA provisions. Unfortunately, Congress thus far has failed to pass a bipartisan reauthorization of VAWA with these enhancements. Instead, Congress just included a temporary extension of the current VAWA funding authorization until December 7, 2018. Funding for VAWA is maintained at Fiscal Year 2018 levels as part of the continuing resolution funding the Department of Justice until December 7. We fully expect Congress to finalize the Fiscal Year 2019 by December 7, and, as has historically been the case, to continue to fund VAWA in future appropriations, regardless of whether or not the VAWA funding authorization has technically expired. Congress frequently funds programs whose authorizing legislation has expired, as long as there continues to be support for those programs and appropriators continue to allocate funding for it in the federal budget. In the interim, it is important to keep advocating for the reauthorization of VAWA legislation.

The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence continues to call on Congress to pass a bipartisan reauthorization bill that bolsters America's response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, closing gaps in previous iterations of VAWA and responding to emerging issues identified by direct service providers, survivors, and other experts - and reauthorize grant programs for another five years with an increased investment in prevention. VAWA has always been, and must always be, a bipartisan commitment to improve access to safety and justice, to prevent future violence, and to uphold the dignity and autonomy of all victims and survivors.