The House of Representatives has passed the reauthorization of VAWA however, the Senate still has not done so. VAWA has improved the criminal justice response to violence against women by: holding rapists accountable for their crimes by strengthening federal penalties for repeat sex offenders and creating a federal “rape shield law,” which is intended to prevent offenders from using victims’ past sexual conduct against them during a rape trial; mandating that victims, no matter their income levels, are not forced to bear the expense of their own rape exams or for service of a protection order; keeping victims safe by requiring that a victim’s protection order will be recognized and enforced in all state, tribal, and territorial jurisdictions within the United States; increasing rates of prosecution, conviction, and sentencing of offenders by helping communities develop dedicated law enforcement and prosecution units and domestic violence dockets; ensuring that police respond to crisis calls and judges understand the realities of domestic and sexual violence by training law enforcement officers, prosecutors, victim advocates and judges; VAWA funds train over 500,000 law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges, and other personnel every year; providing additional tools for protecting women by creating a new federal habitual offender crime and authorizing warrantless arrest authority for federal law enforcement officers who determine there is probable cause when responding to domestic violence cases. VAWA has ensured that victims and their families have access to the services they need to achieve safety and rebuild their lives.

Take action and contact your Senators and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell urging them to take action on this extremely important bill.