

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/congress-reauthorizes-the-leahy-crapo-violence-against-women-act>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

The House of Representatives this week passed reauthorization of the [Leahy-Crapo Violence Against Women Act](#) (VAWA). The legislation, passed last month by the Senate, has now gone to President Obama for his signature.

This latest reauthorization of the 1994 law represents an important step toward all victims receiving services, supports, and criminal justice interventions to help them heal. It expands federal programs to assist local communities in aiding victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Signaling the nation's continued commitment to end these forms of violence, the measure funds myriad community systems that respond to these crimes, including community-based victim services, such as domestic violence and rape crisis programs; sexual assault nurse examiners; law enforcement; prosecutors; and courts. It also supports innovation to address gaps and emerging needs in response systems, which has led to significant advances in victim services for women with disabilities; older adults; immigrant women; and other cultural and linguistic communities. For the first time, VAWA now also includes protections for victims who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer/questioning (LGBTQ) [groups](#) that face higher rates of these forms of violence than the general population and barriers to receiving services.

It also contains provisions that give equal access to justice for Native women. Women who are assaulted on reservations by non-Indians will now be allowed to take their case to tribal courts, which otherwise would not have jurisdiction over assailants who do not live on tribal land.

VAWA's reauthorization and expansion will allow Vera's [Center on Victimization and Safety](#) to continue its work throughout the country fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration and promoting policies and practices that hold abusers accountable, prioritize safety, and help survivors heal.

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