



# Advocacy Update

Sent February 6, 2013

## **Passing the Violence Against Women Act**

This past week, WRJ signed on to two letters in support of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) – one organized by the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, and one organized by the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women. The Violence Against Women Act – a law that provides for crucial services for victims of domestic and sexual abuse and assault – was due for reauthorization in 2011, but Congress failed to pass a bill. VAWA was re-introduced in the Senate last week, and is due for a vote on Thursday.

On average, a woman in America is assaulted or beaten every 9 seconds. Statistics indicate that one in three American readers of this very email have been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused over the course of their lifetime. Half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16. Now is the time to end these appalling trends - tell your Senators that you support the passage of VAWA, and that you want a bill that is inclusive of protections for vulnerable immigrant, Native American and LGBT communities. You can also raise up this issue in your own sisterhoods and communities – the WRJ's domestic violence awareness guide is a great resource to get you started.

## **Fighting for Fair Pay**

January was a big legislative month for many of WRJ's priority issues. In addition to the re-introduction of the Violence Against Women Act, the Paycheck Fairness Act was re-introduced. This bill attempts to fix the wage gap and deter pay discrimination by closing loopholes in the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and barring retaliation against workers who disclose their wages.

WRJ first passed an Equal Pay for Equal Work for Women resolution in 1963. Unfortunately, 50 years later, women in America earn, on average, only 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. WRJ continues to be on the forefront of this fight, including signing on to a letter organized by the National Women's Law Center last month urging Senators to co-sponsor this important piece of legislation. Click here to read more about this issue

## **Women in Combat: A Canadian Comparison**

You've probably heard by now that last month, the Pentagon announced that American military women will be formally allowed to serve in combat roles. This story from the New York Times notes that the U.S. actually lags far behind Canada and Israel in this regard. Canadian women have served in combat since 1989. And though the presence of Israeli women in combat has waxed and waned throughout the years, men and women have fought alongside each other since the pre-state era. A great comment on the Pentagon policy change came from Dr. Ruth, who tweeted, "Women are going to go into combat w/US forces. Since I was sniper in Haganah (Israeli freedom fighters) I'm all for that."

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