

[Date]

[Greeting]

On behalf of [*insert your name or organization here*], [*we/I*] would like to ask for your support in ensuring full funding for the programs authorized by the **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)** in the fiscal year 2008 budget. Because of the overwhelming bipartisan support of both houses of Congress, the tremendously **successful** VAWA was reauthorized and signed into law in the beginning of 2006 and has been expanded in key ways. As an [*individual/organization*] attuned to the unique needs of [*insert program specific information here – i.e. unique needs of children, teens and young adults, etc.*] *we/I* are particularly thrilled with the **essential new programs** in VAWA that focus resources on preventing violence and providing services, protections and justice for young victims of violence. [*We/I*] **request that you, as well as every member of Congress, support the full funding of all existing, as well as newly created programs under VAWA.**

Young people across America experience violence at inordinately high rates and often face unique barriers in getting help to address it.

- Girls and young women between 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence
- In one year, over 4,000 incidents of rape and sexual assault occurred in public schools across the country; two-thirds of sexual assault victims are under the age of 18
- In a college study, only 5% of all attempted or completed rapes were reported to law enforcement

Full funding of VAWA will bring long-needed attention to this violence experienced by children and youth. VAWA specifically addresses these issues by:

- Providing \$15 million each year in grants to provide specialized services to teens and young adults who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking;
- Providing demonstration grants to courts to work with law enforcement, service providers, schools and others to develop policies and procedures to insure justice for young victims and perpetrators of violence;
- Providing \$5 million to middle and high schools to help them develop appropriate policies and procedures to address violence committed against or by students and to train school staff and develop appropriate community referrals and services for students;
- Providing \$15 million to colleges and universities to address violence on campus through services, campus law enforcement and training and to help colleges and universities create a safe learning environment for their students and faculty;
- Funding prevention, including programs that would support gender-specific mentoring and support for boys and girls who need information on positive, non-violent relationships;
- Funding programs that provide services for children exposed to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, which may include direct counseling, advocacy, or mentoring, and helps support their non-abusing parents as well.

Responding to children and youth who are victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking is a critical step in increasing the safety of individuals and families. Early and effective intervention when young people are victimized will not only address the violence currently in their lives, but will provide them with the tools and opportunity to build a violence-free future. By including provisions to address violence affecting young people, the new VAWA 2005 represents a big step forward toward stopping the violence.

[Insert personal information: How your organization would benefit from the new children and youth programs created in VAWA 2005. Include local statistics or a specific need for these programs. Why is this important to you?]

It is critical that you make **full funding of VAWA a top priority in fiscal year 2008**, including the programs that address the unique needs of children and youth victimized by violence. We feel confident that we can count on you to support the full funding of all existing and newly created programs under VAWA.

Please feel free to contact [*contact person*] at [*contact information*] for further information about the impact of domestic and sexual violence on youth in [*your state, city, or region*].

Sincerely,