



**Empowering Youth to End
Domestic Violence**

5777 W. CENTURY BLVD., SUITE 1150
LOS ANGELES, CA 90045

P.O. BOX 21034
WASHINGTON, DC 20009

www.breakthecycle.org
www.loveisrespect.org

Support the Violence Against Women Act *Write an Op-ed*

You can help protect victims of abuse by submitting an op-ed to your local paper. Use this sample to get started:

As students across the country start a new semester, they have a lot to worry about. Studying. Balancing jobs, schoolwork and a social life. Planning their futures. But on top of all of that, many students will be faced sexual assault, stalking or dating violence. Unfortunately, these crimes are all too widespread on our campuses.

Congress could make campuses safer by reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act or VAWA. Since it was first passed in 1994, VAWA has been one of the most critical, effective and life-saving tools in the fight to end sexual assault and dating violence. It has always received vast bipartisan support, as it did when it was passed in the Senate last year with 68 Senators supporting it. But somehow, despite intense negotiations in December, the 112th Congress was not able to pass a final VAWA the Congressional Session ended on January 1st. This is unacceptable. Every day that the 113th Congress fails to pass a VAWA that protects all victims, more and more young people will suffer from dating violence and more students will feel unsafe on their own campuses.

The bipartisan VAWA that passed the Senate last year protects all victims of sexual assault, stalking and domestic violence. It includes protections for some of the most vulnerable communities, including LGBTQ, Native Americans, undocumented immigrants and college students. These provisions aren't about politics; they are about recognizing that everyone, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, class or immigration status, deserves the basic human dignity of being protected from violence. There is no excuse. Congress must pass an inclusive VAWA now.

The reauthorization of VAWA should specify protections and services for LGBTQ victims; the Senate version of VAWA does just that. LGBTQ people should be included in VAWA because they experience domestic violence in 25-35% of relationships, which is the same rate as non LGBTQ people, but have a much harder time finding services. In the last Congress, the House version of the VAWA bill purposely deleted specified protections and services for the LGBTQ community, leaving 12.5 million Americans inadequately protected from domestic/dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. The all-inclusive Senate version of VAWA is not only better for all victims and survivors.

Why would we allow where a person lives in America, their immigration status or whom they love to determine whether or not they are safe from violence? Why would we put up roadblocks to bring their perpetrators to justice? Please join me in calling on Speaker Boehner to follow the lead of Republicans and Democrats in the Senate -- tell him it's a new year and a new Congress and it's time to provide clear protections for all people by sending the inclusive, bipartisan Violence Against Women Act to the President this year!

Need more ideas about what to say? Visit 4vawa.org. Once you're published, be sure to tell us about it by emailing info@breakthecycle.org.