

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 8

Introduced by Assembly Members John A. Pérez and Lowenthal

January 31, 2013

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 8—Relative to violence against women.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 8, as introduced, John A. Pérez. Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act.

This measure would urge the President to sign and Congress to pass the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act and ensure the sustainability of vital programs designed to keep women and families safe from violence and abuse.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The federal Violence Against Women Act
2 (VAWA) was developed with the input of advocates from around
3 the country with diverse backgrounds and experiences, and
4 addresses the real and most important needs of victims of domestic
5 violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking; and
6 WHEREAS, VAWA represents the voices of women and their
7 families, and the voices of victims, survivors, and advocates; and
8 WHEREAS, VAWA was first enacted in 1994, and has been
9 the centerpiece of the federal government's efforts to stamp out
10 domestic and sexual violence. VAWA provides millions of dollars
11 to support programs for victim services, transitional housing, and
12 legal assistance, as well as tools that law enforcement, prosecutors,

1 and judges need to hold offenders accountable and keep
2 communities safe while supporting victims; and

3 WHEREAS, Domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence,
4 and stalking, once considered private matters to be dealt with
5 behind closed doors, have been brought out of the darkness; and

6 WHEREAS, VAWA has been successful because it has had
7 consistently strong, bipartisan support for nearly two decades; and

8 WHEREAS, Senators Patrick Leahy and Mike Crapo and
9 Representative Gwen Moore have introduced identical legislation,
10 the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, in their
11 respective houses with language that includes several updates and
12 improvements to the law, including the following:

13 (a) An emphasis on the need to effectively respond to sexual
14 assault crime by adding new purpose areas and a 25-percent
15 set-aside in the STOP (Services, Training, Officers, and
16 Prosecutors) Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program
17 (STOP Program) and the Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies and
18 Enforcement of Protection Orders Program.

19 (b) Improvements in tools to prevent domestic violence
20 homicides by training law enforcement, victim service providers,
21 and court personnel to identify and manage high-risk offenders
22 and connecting high-risk victims to crisis intervention services.

23 (c) Critical improvements that provide important protections
24 for students, immigrant women, as well as the lesbian, gay,
25 bisexual, and transgender and Native American communities.

26 (d) Improvements in responses to the high rate of violence
27 against women in tribal communities by strengthening concurrent
28 tribal criminal jurisdiction over perpetrators who assault Indian
29 spouses and dating partners in Indian countries.

30 (e) Measures to strengthen housing protections for victims by
31 applying existing housing protections to nine additional federal
32 housing programs.

33 (f) Measures to promote accountability to ensure that federal
34 funds are used for their intended purposes.

35 (g) Consolidation of programs and reductions in authorization
36 levels to address fiscal concerns, and renewed focus on programs
37 that have been most successful.

38 (h) Technical corrections to update definitions throughout the
39 law to provide uniformity and continuity; and

1 WHEREAS, There is a need to maintain services for victims
2 and families at the local, state, and federal levels. VAWA
3 reauthorization would allow existing programs to continue
4 uninterrupted, and would provide for the development of new
5 initiatives to address key areas of concern. These initiatives include
6 the following:

7 (a) Addressing the high rates of domestic violence, dating
8 violence, and sexual assault among women 16 to 24 years of age,
9 inclusive.

10 (b) Improving the response to sexual assault with best practices,
11 training, and communication tools for law enforcement, as well
12 as for health care and legal professionals.

13 (c) Preventing domestic violence homicides through enhanced
14 training for law enforcement, advocates, and others who interact
15 with those at risk; now, therefore, be it

16 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
17 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature requests the President to
18 sign and Congress to pass the Violence Against Women
19 Reauthorization Act and ensure the sustainability of vital programs
20 designed to keep women and families safe from violence and abuse;
21 and be it further

22 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
23 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
24 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the
25 Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative
26 from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the
27 author for appropriate distribution.

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