

Introduced by Senator Evans

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(Coauthors: Senators Alquist, Corbett, De León, Hancock, Kehoe, Liu, Negrete McLeod, Pavley, Wolk, and Yee)

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March 1, 2012

Senate Joint Resolution No. 20—Relative to violence against women.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 20, as introduced, Evans. Violence Against Women Act.

This measure would call on the United States Congress to pass the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2011, Senate Bill No. 1925, authored by Senators Leahy and Crapo, and ensure the sustainability of vital programs designed to keep women and families safe from violence and abuse.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was
2 developed with the input of advocates from around the country
3 and from all walks of life, and addresses the real and most
4 important needs of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault,
5 dating violence, and stalking. VAWA is responsive, streamlined,
6 and constitutionally and fiscally sound, while providing strong
7 accountability measures and appropriate federal government
8 oversight; and

1 WHEREAS, VAWA represents the voices of women and their
2 families, and the voices of victims, survivors, and advocates; and

3 WHEREAS, VAWA was first enacted in 1994, and has been
4 the centerpiece of the federal government's efforts to stamp out
5 domestic and sexual violence. Critical programs authorized under
6 VAWA include support for victim services, transitional housing,
7 and legal assistance; and

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

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

13 WHEREAS, The Violence Against Women Reauthorization
14 Act will provide a five-year authorization for VAWA programs,
15 and reduce authorized funding levels by more than \$144 million,
16 or 19 percent, from the law's 2005 authorization; and

17 WHEREAS, While annual rates of domestic violence have
18 dropped more than 50 percent, domestic violence remains a serious
19 issue. Every day in the United States, three women are killed by
20 abusive husbands and partners. In California in 2010, there were
21 166,361 domestic violence calls, including more than 65,000 that
22 involved a weapon; and

23 WHEREAS, The Violence Against Women Reauthorization
24 Act includes several updates and improvements to the law,
25 including the following:

26 (a) An emphasis on the need to effectively respond to sexual
27 assault crime by adding new purpose areas and a 25-percent set
28 aside in the STOP (Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors)
29 Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program (STOP
30 Program) and the Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies and
31 Enforcement of Protection Orders Program.

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

36 (c) Improvements in responses to the high rate of violence
37 against women in tribal communities by strengthening concurrent
38 tribal criminal jurisdiction over perpetrators who assault Indian
39 spouses and dating partners in Indian countries.

1 (d) Measures to strengthen housing protections for victims by
2 applying existing housing protections to nine additional federal
3 housing programs.

4 (e) Measures to promote accountability to ensure that federal
5 funds are used for their intended purposes.

6 (f) Consolidation of programs and reductions in authorization
7 levels to address fiscal concerns, and renewed focus on programs
8 that have been most successful.

9 (g) Technical corrections to update definitions throughout the
10 law to provide uniformity and continuity; and

11 WHEREAS, There is a need to maintain services for victims
12 and families at the local, state, and federal levels. Reauthorization
13 would allow existing programs to continue uninterrupted, and
14 would provide for the development of new initiatives to address
15 key areas of concern. These initiatives include the following:

16 (a) Addressing the high rates of domestic violence, dating
17 violence, and sexual assault among women 16 to 24 years,
18 inclusive, of age by combating tolerant youth attitudes toward
19 violence.

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

23 (c) Preventing domestic violence homicides through enhanced
24 training for law enforcement, advocates, and others who interact
25 with those at risk. A growing number of experts agree that these
26 homicides are predictable, and therefore preventable, if we know
27 the warning signs; now, therefore, be it

28 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*
29 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature calls on the United States
30 Congress to pass the Violence Against Women Reauthorization
31 Act of 2011, Senate Bill No. 1925, authored by Senators Leahy
32 and Crapo, and ensure the sustainability of vital programs designed
33 to keep women and families safe from violence and abuse; and be
34 it further

35 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
36 this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
37 States, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Majority
38 Leader of the Senate, each Senator and Representative from

1 California in the Congress of the United States, and to the author
 2 for appropriate distribution.

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5 **CORRECTIONS:**

6 **Heading—Line 7.**

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