

Senate Joint Resolution

No. 20

Introduced by Senator Evans

(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Bonnie Lowenthal)

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

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Alejo, Ammiano, Atkins, Block, Blumenfield, Bonilla, Brownley, Buchanan, Butler, Carter, Chesbro, Gordon, Hall, Hayashi, Hill, Huber, Huffman, Ma, Miller, Mitchell, Monning, Portantino, Torres, and Wieckowski)

March 1, 2012

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 20, as amended, 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

1 accountability measures and appropriate federal government
2 oversight; and

3 WHEREAS, VAWA represents the voices of women and their
4 families, and the voices of victims, survivors, and advocates; and

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

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

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

15 WHEREAS, The Violence Against Women Reauthorization
16 Act of 2011 will provide a five-year ~~authorization~~ *reauthorization*
17 for VAWA programs, and reduce authorized funding levels by
18 more than \$144 million, or 19 percent, from the law's 2005
19 authorization; and

20 WHEREAS, While annual rates of domestic violence have
21 dropped more than 50 percent, domestic violence remains a serious
22 issue. Every day in the United States, three women are killed by
23 abusive husbands and partners. In California in 2010, there were
24 166,361 domestic violence calls, including more than 65,000 that
25 involved a weapon; and

26 WHEREAS, The Violence Against Women Reauthorization
27 Act of 2011 includes several updates and improvements to the law,
28 including the following:

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

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

39 (c) Improvements in responses to the high rate of violence
40 against women in tribal communities by strengthening concurrent

1 tribal criminal jurisdiction over perpetrators who assault Indian
2 spouses and dating partners in Indian countries.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

37 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
38 this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
39 States, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Majority
40 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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