



# COALITION TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS GLOBALLY

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## Pass the International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA)

One out of every three women worldwide will be physically, sexually or otherwise abused during her lifetime—with rates reaching 70 percent in some countries. This type of violence ranges from rape to domestic violence and child marriage to so-called “honor killings.” Violence against women and girls is a human rights violation, a public health epidemic, and a barrier to solving global challenges such as extreme poverty, HIV/AIDS and conflict. Gender-based violence (GBV) occurs in peacetime and in conflict and knows no national or cultural barriers. Violence against women and girls has an economic cost too with household incomes declining due to lost wages, medical costs, and legal fees among other items.

The bipartisan **International Violence Against Women Act (HR 3571/ S XXXX)**, also known as **IVAWA**, makes ending violence against women and girls a top diplomatic and foreign assistance priority. It permanently authorizes the State Department’s Office of Global Women’s Issues with the position of Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues, who coordinates policies, programs, and funding relating to gender and the status of women internationally, including those intended to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV). **These entities exist within the current agency structure, having first been established in the early 2000’s.**

IVAWA will streamline and better coordinate anti-GBV programming across various U.S. government agencies, making addressing GBV a cornerstone of U.S. development and foreign policy. **Since this legislation is aimed at coordinating and integrating existing programs, it does not require the appropriation of additional funding.** More specifically, the IVAWA would do the following:

### **Increase Legal and Judicial Protection to Address Gender-based Violence.**

The IVAWA focuses on establishing and supporting laws and legal structures that help prevent and appropriately respond to all forms of gender-based violence. Emphasis is placed on promoting political, legal, and institutional reforms that recognize such violence as a crime and train police and the judiciary to hold violators accountable and to respond to the needs of survivors.

### **Increase Health Sector Capacity to Address Gender-based Violence.**

The IVAWA will integrate programs to address gender-based violence into already existing health programs focused on child survival, women’s health, and HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment. It takes a holistic “systems” approach and emphasizes enhancing the capacity of the health sector to assess the impact of violence on one’s health and help protect individuals from violence.

### **Change Social Norms to Prevent Gender-based Violence.**

The IVAWA focuses on preventing violence by changing community norms and attitudes about the acceptability of violence. It will support public awareness programs to change attitudes that condone and at times encourage violence against women and girls, and will emphasize community-based solutions. Activities supported by the IVAWA could include programs that work with male leaders to help other men and boys become more supportive of respectful and non-violent relationships.

### **Increase Women’s Economic Opportunity and Education.**

The IVAWA focuses on reducing women and girls’ vulnerability to violence by improving their economic status and educational opportunities. Emphasis is placed on ensuring women’s access to job training and employment opportunities and increasing their right to own land and property. The legislation also addresses the rights of women and girls to work and go to school free of sexual coercion and assault.

To cosponsor this legislation, please contact Andrew Goczkowski, [Andrew.Goczkowski@mail.house.gov](mailto:Andrew.Goczkowski@mail.house.gov), in Congresswoman Schakowsky’s Office, Ariana Reks, [Ariana\\_Reks@boxer.senate.gov](mailto:Ariana_Reks@boxer.senate.gov), in Senator Boxer’s Office, or Sarah Groen, [Sarah\\_Groen@collins.senate.gov](mailto:Sarah_Groen@collins.senate.gov), in Senator Collins’ Office.

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