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Statement of Esta Soler, President and Founder, Futures Without Violence On House Passage of the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization

“Today marks an important step in our country’s quest to end violence against women. We thank Representatives Karen Bass and Brian Fitzpatrick for their unwavering leadership in introducing and championing the bipartisan Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2019. We also deeply appreciate the leadership of Chairman Jerry Nadler and Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who committed to making VAWA reauthorization a priority and succeeded today in moving us closer to the time when no woman, man or child ever has to know the pain of domestic violence or sexual assault.

This new VAWA makes important improvements to the existing law:

- It expands prevention programs. We can no longer choose between services for victims, or training for law enforcement, or prevention programs that stop the violence *before* it starts. We must do it all. We must mend the victims and end the violence.
- It makes it harder for convicted abusers, rapists and stalkers to get guns. These modest expansions will immediately save lives as we know the presence of a gun in a home with domestic violence means a woman is five times more likely to die.
- It protects women, children and law enforcement officers on Tribal lands by allowing Tribes to prosecute crimes committed against their members by non-Native people.

Rarely does legislation have the power to save lives the moment it passes. VAWA is such a bill. We now call on the U.S. Senate to quickly take up the House bill, and look forward to working with Senators Lindsey Graham, Joni Ernst and Dianne Feinstein to pass it. There is no time to waste.”

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About FUTURES

Futures Without Violence is a national health and social justice nonprofit that develops groundbreaking programs, policies, and campaigns to empower individuals and organizations working to end violence against women and children. Striving to reach new audiences and transform social norms, we train professionals such as doctors, nurses, judges, educators and athletic coaches on improving responses to violence and trauma. We also work with advocates, policymakers, and others to build sustainable community leadership and educate people everywhere about the importance of respect and healthy relationships. For more information, visit www.futureswithoutviolence.org.