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Statement of Esta Soler,

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Passage of Violence Against Women Act in House of Representatives Is An Important Step to Make Our Country Safer, But the Senate Must Act as Well

“The Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization of 2021 (VAWA 2021) makes a deep and badly needed investment in the violence prevention our country needs. Its passage by the House of Representatives is an important step in making our country safer. This landmark legislation builds on the wisdom we have gained about how to prevent violence, support survivors, and keep women and children safe. Its increased authorized funding for the Saving Money and Reducing Tragedies (SMART) through Prevention program, a legacy of the late, great Congressman John Lewis, is especially noteworthy and is a fitting tribute to a man whose extraordinary accomplishments included violence reduction and investments in the next generation.

“VAWA 2021 also makes significant progress in expanding programs to meet the needs of culturally specific communities and improving employers’ response to workers who experience domestic or sexual violence or harassment. Its enactment would allow us to intensify our work helping survivors return to the workforce so they can achieve the economic security they need to protect themselves and their children. We commend, also, the fact that VAWA 2021 would improve access to housing for victims and survivors; protect survivors of dating violence from firearm homicide; and improve the health care system’s response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. But the work to protect immigrants facing domestic and sexual violence must continue.

“We are enormously grateful to Representatives Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-Texas), Jerry Nadler (D-New York), chair of the House Judiciary Committee, Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Penn.) for sponsoring and championing this essential legislation. With COVID-19 confining so many people to their homes and reshaping the ways we are able to protect those at risk, we especially need VAWA 2021 now. The delays that prevented passage during the last Congress must not recur. The next urgent step is for the Senate to pass this bill without any weakening amendments. There is no time to waste.”

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ABOUT FUTURES WITHOUT VIOLENCE:

For more than 30 years, FUTURES has been providing groundbreaking programs, policies and campaigns that empower individuals and organizations working to end violence against women and children around the world. Striving to reach new audiences and transform social norms, FUTURES trains professionals such as doctors, nurses, judges and athletic coaches on improving responses to violence and abuse. FUTURES also works with advocates, policymakers and others to build sustainable community leadership and educate people everywhere about the importance of respect and healthy relationships.