Reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act with Strong Tribal Provisions for Native Women

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) addresses violence and sexual assault by providing the resources and services necessary for public safety. This bill is especially significant for Native American communities, which deal with domestic and sexual violence at unparalleled rates.

In April 2019, the House passed H.R. 1585, a VAWA reauthorization bill that expands tribal jurisdiction. Because 96 percent of the perpetrators of sexual and domestic violence in Indian Country are non-Native, expanding tribal jurisdiction over non-Native assailants is necessary for seeking justice for victims.

In addition, H.R. 1585 expands the list of crimes over which tribes would have jurisdiction to include sexual assault, sex trafficking, stalking, assault on law enforcement officers, and child abuse, in addition to domestic violence.

Two VAWA reauthorization bills have been introduced in the Senate: S.2843 and S.2920. S. 2843, introduced by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (CA), largely parallels the House bill with strong tribal jurisdiction provisions. S. 2920, introduced by Sen. Joni Ernst (IA), is missing some of these crucial protections for tribes, and would also roll back tribal provisions enacted in the last VAWA statute.

The Senate must pass a VAWA reauthorization bill with strong tribal provisions that will:

» Protect Native victims of sexual assault and keep Native children safe from violence by expanding tribal jurisdiction over non-Native perpetrators.
» Promote tribal access to federal criminal databases.
» Create a protocol for responding to missing persons cases.
» Improve coordination and response rates across multiple jurisdictions involved in investigating cases of missing and murdered victims.
» Protect tribal law enforcement from violence as they work to keep the community safe.

Reauthorize VAWA with strong tribal provisions.

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