

PATRICK MEEHAN
7TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA



OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT
REFORM COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TARP AND
FINANCIAL SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY,
INFORMATION POLICY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL
RELATIONS AND PROCUREMENT REFORM

HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COUNTERTERRORISM AND INTELLIGENCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CYBERSECURITY,
INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION AND
SECURITY TECHNOLOGIES

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3807

TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RAILROADS, PIPELINES
AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

March 20, 2012

House Speaker John Boehner
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner, Leader Reid, Leader Pelosi and Leader McConnell:

I am writing to urge swift consideration and passage of the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization in both the House and Senate.

As a former U.S. Attorney from the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, and before that the Delaware County, Pennsylvania district attorney, I have seen first-hand how the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) ensures that resources are available for local authorities to combat domestic abuse. Because of VAWA programs, our communities are safer and better equipped.

Existing VAWA grant programs help maintain rape crisis centers and ensures law enforcement, the judicial system and victims' advocates are collaborating to provide comprehensive support and protection to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. VAWA programs provide housing protections and assistance for victims, and ensures victims of violence in underserved populations are not forced to endure abuse because of cultural or language barriers, or for fear of deportation. Like the Clery Act requires reporting of crimes on college campuses, VAWA ensures accurate data on domestic violence is collected by law enforcement and health officials for study and action.

According to a 2010 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study, more than 1.9 million women in Pennsylvania have been a victim of sexual assault, physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetimes (42 million nationwide). In the year preceding the study, 1.3 million American women were raped. The breadth of the crisis of violence against women is national, and so must be its response. As a former prosecutor, I can testify to the effectiveness of VAWA programs and the protections it provides to victims of violence. Now as a legislator, I believe Congress must send the strong message that domestic and sexual violence against anyone, for any reason, is unacceptable.

I must convey my disappointment that VAWA is becoming yet another political football for the parties to fight over. The many other challenges we face are profound, and the

disagreement over their solutions is real. Congress can and should exercise its oversight responsibility to ensure these VAWA programs are effective for both victims and taxpayers. Yet we must not fail our wives, our mothers, our sisters or our daughters by letting needless partisan fights delay this law.

I will be meeting with law enforcement, judicial officials, victims' advocates and others in the near future to hear their stories and get their feedback on VAWA programs and improvements.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patrick Meehan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress