

January 30, 2012

To The Editor:

Sexual assault and domestic violence are pervasive in Kansas and across the nation. In fact, recent 2011 prevalence data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that a significant percentage of women, children and men are directly affected by this violence in their lifetimes. Add to this the impact that sexual and domestic violence has on family members, friends, and by-standers, and one can conclude that it quite likely affects everyone in Kansas in some way.

In 1994, initial passage of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was a giant step forward for our nation. VAWA meant that our federal government finally acknowledged domestic and sexual violence as serious, pervasive issues, causing tremendous harm to citizens across the nation. It put resources into helping victims, educating criminal legal professionals, and building collaborative teams and consistent responses. Millions of families are better off as a result.

In 2012, VAWA is up for reauthorization by Congress. Evidence shows that VAWA is working. Over the last 15 years, domestic and sexual violence have declined. But there is more work to do. On average, each day three women in America are murdered by their intimate partners and several hundred people are raped or sexually assaulted. The reauthorized Violence Against Women Act will build on efforts to prevent violence before it begins and teach the next generation that violence is wrong.

Congress must reauthorize this legislation and remain partners in building healthy communities.

Sincerely,

Joyce Grover  
Executive Director  
Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence