



# APA Public Interest Government Relations Office

## Violence Against Women Act

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was initially enacted in 1994 as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, creating the first U.S. federal legislation acknowledging domestic violence and sexual assault as crimes, and providing federal resources to encourage community-coordinated responses to combating violence. VAWA was reauthorized in 2000 as part of the Victims of Torture and Violence Prevention Act and again in 2005 as part of the Department of Justice Appropriations and Reauthorization Act.

**VAWA is the most critical federal law related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.** Specifically, VAWA:

- Acknowledges that domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking cause societal harm;
- Provides funding for resources to assist victims of violence;
- Creates possibilities for women to leave abusive relationships; and
- Improves the criminal justice system’s response to violence through training.

### VAWA Funding

- Although many important programs are authorized under VAWA, this law continues to be underfunded.
- Many critical provisions authorized in the 2005 VAWA reauthorization have yet to receive federal funding including training for health professionals; developing public health responses to violence; interventions in healthcare settings; and research on violence against Indian women.
- Additionally, the President’s Fiscal Year 2009 budget proposes a \$120 million cut to vital VAWA programs.

VAWA Appropriations	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09 (proposed)
Labor, HHS, Education	\$178.5 million	\$175.7 million	\$172.6 million	\$172.3 million
Commerce, Justice, Science	\$386.7 million	\$382.5 million	\$399.8 million	\$280.0 million

### APA Recommendations

**In order to ensure that those impacted by domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking receive the critical services authorized under VAWA, APA strongly urges Congress to appropriate funding for VAWA at the fully authorized level for Fiscal Year 2009.** This amount includes \$683 million in authorized funding through Commerce, Justice and Science appropriations and \$320 million in authorized funding through the Labor, Health & Human Services, and Education appropriations.

