

CONCERNED
WOMEN *for* **AMERICA**
LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

March 15, 2021

The Honorable
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative,

The purpose of the **Violence Against Women Act** (VAWA) from its inception has been to protect, support, and seek justice for women who have suffered assault or abuse. Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee (CWALAC) fully supports that mission. The goal of VAWA reauthorization efforts should advance these objectives, not compromise them. **The reauthorization must address misguided policies imposing gender identity mandates that fundamentally threaten the privacy and safety of women and girls.** Unfortunately, H.R.1620 only compounds these inherent problems.

Current VAWA law grants special protections to people who identify themselves as female but are biologically male, both by defining them as “underserved populations” and elevating their rights above those of women seeking refuge from violence. This is an affront to the reality and dignity of biological women who have suffered at the hand of abusive men and endangers the privacy and safety of all abused women seeking places of refuge for shelter and recovery. There is simply no reason to compromise a female victim’s privacy and safety by granting access to male-bodied transgender individuals in women’s shelters.

H.R. 1620 imposes similar provisions in prisons. Title XI of the bill gives preferential placement decisions to males in custody asserting identity as women. The danger of this is real. In the state of Washington, Pierce County began [housing male prisoners identifying as women with female inmates](#). A Department of Corrections employee reported “a recent incident in which an inmate from a male facility raped a female in the women’s prison upon arrival.”

CWALAC strongly opposes any reauthorization that does not address the crucial, fundamental conflict between women’s rights and transgender access. Nondiscrimination provisions in current law weaponize transgender activism against biological women. That the Violence Against Women Act is leading to violence against women is unthinkable!

VAWA reauthorization must ensure that nothing in the intent or implementation of its provisions can be interpreted as requirement to compromise, threaten, or undermine the privacy, safety, and rights of females in order to accommodate transgender individuals.

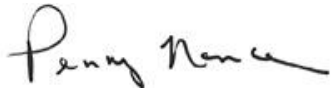
The 2015 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey underscores how women in the U.S. are victims of violence at disproportionately higher levels than men. For all forms of violence, 25% of women compared to 10% men; for rape, 21.3 % women compared to 2.6% men; stalking 16% women compared to 5.6% men. In spite of federal programs and annual funding increases for VAWA, rape among women rose 3% between 2010 and 2015 (18.3% to

21.3%). Clearly, women/females of all ages need to remain the sole focus of VAWA programs and funding as it was intended from the beginning.

We stand in favor of much of what VAWA seeks to accomplish, including eliminating the backlog of rape kits under the Debbie Smith Act and preventing the heinous practice of female genital mutilation in the United States which targets the most vulnerable of the female population, young girls. Congress should encourage states to work through education, awareness, enforcement, and increased criminal penalties toward total eradication of this abhorrent, violent practice of cutting and mutilating female genitalia which wounds girls for life.

Unfortunately, H.R. 1620 falls far short of the kind of bipartisan engagement that should be the basis for any major reauthorization. Instead, the bill seeks to peddle counterproductive gender identity ideology and incendiary language to accomplish political objectives. Therefore, as the largest public policy organization for women in the nation, CWALAC urges you to oppose H.R. 1620 and work to improve VAWA law to re-focus on the fundamental principles of its inception, protecting women and young girl victims of violence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Penny Nance". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Penny Nance,
CEO and President
Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee