



# Legislative Action Alert

February 28, 2013

## **Speak Up for Tribal Justice in Indian Country Urge Your Representative to Vote “No” on VAWA House Substitute and “Yes” on S. 47**

Yesterday the U.S. House of Representatives voted 414 to 9 to approve the House rule for House-floor consideration of S. 47, the Senate-passed version of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) reauthorization. **TODAY** the House is expected to vote on the House VAWA substitute bill. NIHB is urging a “No” vote on the House VAWA substitute. If the vote on the House substitute fails, the House will vote on S. 47, the bi-partisan Senate-passed bill that contains key Tribal provisions that protect Native women from domestic violence and sexual assaults committed by non-Indian perpetrators. Please join NIHB and Tribal communities from across the country in asking your Representatives to support S. 47 **TODAY!**

**What You Can Do:** Contact your House of Representative member **TODAY** and request your Member to vote “No” on the House VAWA substitute bill and vote “Yes” on S. 47.

- To determine your Representative, visit <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>
- To be connected to a Representative via phone, call the Congressional Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected to your Representative and after you are connected to the office, ask to speak with the Law or Tribal Affairs aide.

### **Tell Your Representative:**

- I am a constituent and calling to ask Representative \_\_\_\_ to support S. 47, which appropriately addresses the high incidence of domestic and sexual abuse of American Indian women by giving the necessary authority to Tribal police and courts to prosecute non-Indian perpetrators.
- Domestic and sexual violence against American Indian women is not a political issue, but an increasing concern that continues to threaten the health and safety well-being of Tribal communities.
- Indian tribes are the only governments in America without jurisdiction to protect women from domestic and sexual violence in their own communities.
- Tribal government is the best government to protect Indian Country’s Mothers, Daughters, Sisters and Wives from jurisdictional gaps or safe havens for criminals.

- Thank you for your support of this critical bill.

**Questions:** Please contact NIHB's Senior Legislative Associate, Jeremy Marshall at (202) 507-4078 or [Jmarshall@nihb.org](mailto:Jmarshall@nihb.org).

### **Background on the proposed House VAWA substitute legislation and S. 47**

On February 22, the U.S. House of Representatives leadership filed VAWA substitute legislation, which it will vote on this week and significantly differs from the strong bipartisan Senate-passed version, ***S. 47 – the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013***. S. 47 contains a key Tribal provision that would allow Tribal courts to prosecute non-Indian perpetrators accused of assaulting Indian women on Tribal lands.

The House VAWA substitute bill includes disincentives for Tribal governments and Tribal police to combat violence against Native women; offers non-Indian defendants the ability to remove their case from Tribal court at any time; limits existing Tribal authority to issue civil orders of protection against non-Native defendants who commit acts of domestic and sexual violence against Indian women. The House substitute fails to recognize existing Tribal sovereignty by requiring Tribes to seek U.S. Department of Justice certification before exercising jurisdiction over non-Indian offenders.