



Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for the Senate-approved Violence Against Women Act reauthorization bill known as S. 47 and to explain my concerns about its counterpart in the House.

Since it was first authorized in 1994, VAWA has supported countless victims of domestic violence, stalking, dating violence and sexual assault. VAWA-funded programs have provided housing and legal services to survivors across the country. The law has provided police and nonprofit organizations the resources they need to investigate more cases and prosecute those responsible. Over time, VAWA has progressively protected more Americans, including seniors and Americans with disabilities.

VAWA has meant tangible successes in the fight against domestic and other forms of violence. Reporting of these incidents has increased by 51 percent since 1994, when we first passed the law.

S. 47 builds on these successes by adding protections for immigrants, Native Americans, and LGBT Americans. Under this measure, Native Americans will be able to effectively address sexual violence in their own communities. U-Visa holders will receive new legal protections against stalking. LGBT Americans will be added to the measure's non-discrimination clause. More funding will be given to college campus programs that combat human trafficking and sexual assault.

I applaud my colleagues in the Senate for passing this strong measure 78 to 22 with bipartisan support.

Unfortunately, my colleagues introduced a weaker and unacceptable House version of S. 47 last week. It removes the necessary protections for Native Americans, immigrants, and LGBT Americans and weakens the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and the SAFER Act.

As lawmakers, we must cement protections for every American harmed by sexual violence—regardless of race, sexual orientation, or country of origin.

As discussions of VAWA conclude this week, I urge my colleagues to support the Senate bill, and to accept no substitute for a strong, inclusive final product.

