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United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Member of the House of Representatives:

On behalf of the American Bar Association, with nearly 400,000 members, I urge you to vote “NO” on the Substitute Amendment to S. 47, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013. If the amendment fails and S. 47 is considered, I urge you to vote “YES” on S. 47.

S. 47, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 as introduced by Senators Leahy and Crapo, has been carefully crafted to reflect discussions with more than 2,000 advocates and experts from across the country. It passed the Senate earlier this month with overwhelming bipartisan support by a vote of 78-22. It is substantially similar to S. 1925 from the 112th Congress, but eliminates the procedural barrier that impeded its consideration by this body last year.

VAWA’s current authorization expired more than a year ago, and its reauthorization is critical. This is Congress’ opportunity to amend VAWA to combat domestic violence, dating violence, sexual violence and stalking more effectively. S. 47 ensures that survivors of sexual assault have access to services; improves the campus response to violence; provides access to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender survivors who frequently are excluded from services; and ensures that survivors in Indian country and the United States Territories have access to justice. While the proposed substitute amendment and S. 47 share many of the same provisions, the House substitute eliminates certain critical improvements and actually rolls back some provisions of the law that have been successful.

We urge you to vote “NO” on the substitute amendment and “YES” on S. 47. VAWA has become an integral part of our public safety strategy that has empirical support for its effectiveness. We should move forward together to address the needs of all victims and hold more offenders accountable.

Sincerely,



Laurel G. Bellows