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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 1058 Session of  
2020

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INTRODUCED BY ISAACSON, MURT, McCLINTON, MADDEN, HILL-EVANS,  
BURGOS, CEPHAS, A. DAVIS, DRISCOLL, FREEMAN, GALLOWAY, GREEN,  
HANBIDGE, HOHENSTEIN, HOWARD, KENYATTA, KINSEY, KORTZ,  
KRUEGER, LONGIETTI, McCARTER, PASHINSKI, SAMUELSON, SANCHEZ,  
SCHLOSSBERG, SHUSTERMAN, WEBSTER, WILLIAMS, ZABEL, CIRESI,  
YOUNGBLOOD AND DELLOSO, OCTOBER 19, 2020

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, OCTOBER 19, 2020

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A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the United States Senate to reauthorize the Violence  
2 Against Women Act.

3 WHEREAS, Seventy-five years after some women were granted the  
4 right to vote, 29 years after the monumental passage of the  
5 Voting Rights Act of 1965, which provided voting rights to Black  
6 women, and decades following the Women's Movement of the 1960s  
7 and 1970s, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was enacted in  
8 1994; and

9 WHEREAS, VAWA was the first statement of its kind and carved  
10 into law legal protections and Federal funding for women  
11 experiencing domestic violence, stalking and sexual assault; and

12 WHEREAS, The monumental resolution ignited a dramatic shift  
13 in the national conversation around domestic and sexual violence  
14 against women and sought to address a justice system that  
15 routinely failed women who fell victim to gender-based violence  
16 and crime; and

1       WHEREAS, Since the 1994 passage of VAWA and its three  
2 reauthorizations in 2000, 2005 and 2013, the landmark  
3 legislation has activated the release of more than \$8 billion in  
4 grants to local, state and tribal governments and gave way to  
5 the creation of private advocacy groups, such as the well-known  
6 Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN); and

7       WHEREAS, VAWA also allowed for the development of abuse and  
8 assault hotlines as well as emergency housing programs for women  
9 and mothers fleeing domestic violence, while also increasing  
10 funding for law enforcement to address the inadequate education  
11 and training resources related to responding to cases of battery  
12 and sexual assault; and

13       WHEREAS, Each reauthorization of VAWA has sought to improve  
14 inclusivity and acknowledge the intersectional experiences of  
15 women across different races, genders and cultural backgrounds  
16 in order to offer equitable protections for victims of domestic  
17 violence, sexual assault, trafficking and stalking; and

18       WHEREAS, In 2000, VAWA was reauthorized by Congress through  
19 the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act to  
20 include a new program for victims of domestic violence, dating  
21 violence, sexual assault and stalking in need of transitional  
22 housing and a new program designed to protect older adults and  
23 women with disabilities; and

24       WHEREAS, The 2000 VAWA reauthorization was the first to  
25 improve protections for immigrant women as well as victims of  
26 dating and intimate partner violence; and

27       WHEREAS, The 2000 VAWA reauthorization further empowered  
28 victims of domestic violence who flee across state lines to  
29 obtain custody orders without returning to the jurisdiction  
30 where they may be in danger; and

1       WHEREAS, The 2005 VAWA reauthorization was accomplished  
2 through an amendment of the Violence Against Women and  
3 Department of Justice Reauthorization Act, which added  
4 protections for battered and trafficked nonimmigrants, programs  
5 for tribal and indigenous victims and programs developed to  
6 improve the public health response to violence against women;  
7 and

8       WHEREAS, This reauthorization further sought to encourage  
9 community responses and initiatives to violence against women  
10 and emphasized collaboration among law enforcement, health and  
11 housing professionals; and

12       WHEREAS, The 2005 VAWA reauthorization provided enhanced  
13 penalties for repeat stalking offenders, expanded the Federal  
14 "stalking" definition to include cyberstalking and revised the  
15 definition of "interstate stalking" to include, among other  
16 things, the surveillance of a victim with the intent to kill,  
17 injure, harass or intimidate; and

18       WHEREAS, The current proposal to reauthorize VAWA, the  
19 Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019, as  
20 introduced by U.S. Representative Karen Bass in H.R. 1585,  
21 includes landmark provisions for the LGBTQ+ community and tribal  
22 and indigenous communities, thereby highlighting the  
23 significantly higher risk of abuse and violence against women  
24 and girls in these communities; and

25       WHEREAS, H.R. 1585 seeks to expand the jurisdiction of tribal  
26 courts over nonindigenous men who abuse indigenous women, with  
27 more than one-half of American Indian and Alaskan Native women  
28 reporting sexual violence or physical violence by an intimate  
29 partner, while also extending protective rights to transgender  
30 individuals who are at a disproportionately higher risk of

1 violence or abuse; and

2 WHEREAS, H.R. 1585 seeks to remove the "boyfriend loophole"  
3 by extending the prohibitions to former or current intimate  
4 partners of victims of domestic violence, sexual violence and  
5 stalking; and

6 WHEREAS, On April 4, 2019, the United States House of  
7 Representatives passed H.R. 1585 with bipartisan support and  
8 delivered the bill to the United States Senate for  
9 consideration; and

10 WHEREAS, Currently, H.R. 1585 remains stagnant in the United  
11 States Senate, with no indication that the bill will be  
12 considered; and

13 WHEREAS, With each passing day VAWA remains untouched in the  
14 United States Senate, the safety and lives of many women and  
15 girls are put into extreme danger; and

16 WHEREAS, Every month an average of 52 women are shot and  
17 killed by an intimate partner, and nearly 1,000,000 women have  
18 reported being shot or shot at by their partner in their  
19 lifetime; and

20 WHEREAS, The ripple effect of the expiration of VAWA,  
21 juxtaposed with the unwillingness to close the "boyfriend  
22 loophole" and failure to continue to invest in the protection of  
23 women and girls, will extend far beyond the intimate  
24 relationship and affect the children who witness or live with  
25 violence against women and girls, family members, coworkers and  
26 law enforcement officers who respond to the violence; and

27 WHEREAS, The fundamental goal of VAWA is to prevent domestic  
28 violence, sexual assault and stalking against women and girls,  
29 to respond to the needs of crime victims and to change public  
30 attitudes related to domestic violence, sexual assault,

1 trafficking and stalking through collaboration between the  
2 criminal justice system, public and private social services  
3 agencies, schools, colleges and universities and public health  
4 organizations; therefore be it

5       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the  
6 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania urge the United States Senate to  
7 reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act; and be it further

8       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives condemn gender-  
9 based violence, sexual assault, trafficking and stalking; and be  
10 it further

11       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge the United  
12 States Senate to pass the Violence Against Women Reauthorization  
13 Act of 2019 to make the health, safety and general welfare of  
14 women and girls a national priority regardless of their age,  
15 gender, race, ethnicity or residential status; and be it further

16       RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be forwarded to  
17 United States Senator Robert P. Casey and United States Senator  
18 Pat Toomey.