

**SEPTEMBER 28, 2005**

**SCHAKOWSKY-AUTHORED PROTECTIONS TO HELP IMMIGRANT WOMEN PASS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**BILL WILL HELP IMMIGRANT WOMEN FLEEING ABUSIVE SPOUSES**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Provisions authored by U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky to protect immigrant women from abusive spouses were included in H.R. 3402, the Department of Justice Authorization Act, which passed the House of Representatives today. These provisions would help protect immigrant women fleeing abusive relationships by preventing the victim's deportation while their applications are considered, providing access to work permits and economic security, and extending additional legal protections to vulnerable family members.

Representative Schakowsky introduced H.R. 3188, the Immigrant Victims of Violence Protection Act, on June 30. This comprehensive bill would allow battered victims access to health insurance, food, and other benefits required to escape their abusers in addition to the provisions included in the Department of Justice Authorization Act which passed the House today.

Representative Schakowsky delivered the following floor statement today in support of these provisions to protect immigrant women:

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of provisions from my bill, H.R. 3188, the Immigrant Victims of Violence Protection Act, which are included in the Violence Against Women Reauthorization.

These immigrant provisions reflect hard bipartisan work of many members of Congress. And I thank Representative Conyers for his leadership on this issue. This bill is a good start. It would help immigrant women who need to leave their abusive spouses by preventing their deportation while their application is being considered. It would provide them access to work permits so that they can get a job on their own and gain economic security independent of their abusers. In addition to spouses, this bill would also protect battered children as well as parents from abusive family members.

However, we can do more. For example, this bill does not include provisions which would allow battered victims access to health insurance, food, and other benefits required to escape their abuser. I will work hard to include these provisions in the final bill that is enacted.

As a first-generation American and someone who represents an immigrant-rich community in Chicago, I understand the unique challenges immigrant women face.

"My neighbor called the police, but I didn't sign the report out of fear," said a Mexican immigrant and mother of four at a press conference I held in Chicago. She said she stayed with her abusive husband for 13 years to be with her children.

This is the voice of women across the country that need our help to get out of the cycle of abuse. This Congress must remain vigilant in this fight to protect one of the most vulnerable populations in this country. I challenge my colleagues to make the fight against domestic violence a top priority.