

JUNE 12, 2002

**SCHAKOWSKY ADDRESSES FORUM ORGANIZED BY NATIONAL NETWORK
TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- I am honored to join an amazing group of advocates committed to the cause of ending domestic violence. Every two minutes, someone is sexually assaulted in this country. Nearly one in three women experience at least one physical assault by a partner during adulthood. This is simply unacceptable.

On the floor of the House of Representatives a month ago, as Sexual Assault Awareness Month was coming to a close, I proposed that every month be Sexual Assault Awareness Month until there is no longer a woman in this world who fears being raped or assaulted by her partner, an acquaintance, or a stranger. We need to keep taking action and speaking up until violence against women is stopped for good.

To do this, it takes strong laws, it takes resources, and it takes enforcement. It also takes adequate services and compassion for survivors, and it takes tireless dedication from advocates like you.

Fortunately, in 1993, after many years of advocacy, Congress finally passed the Violence Against Women Act, or VAWA. This groundbreaking legislation strengthened federal laws against domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and provided billions of dollars for grant programs for education and prevention, as well as survivor services.

VAWA has helped elevate the issue of violence against women - now some hospitals are hiring victims' advocates in emergency rooms and training doctors to recognize signs of domestic violence; we have the National Domestic Violence Hotline, which has responded to more than 720,000 calls since its inception in 1996; and there are books and movies being produced that realistically depict what happens to a woman and those around her when she is raped or abused.

Of course, our work is far from done. We still don't have a Violence Against Women Office in the Department of Justice that is truly independent. I am working with Representative Slaughter to get this legislation, H.R. 28, passed. It has over 150 cosponsors and we need more.

In addition, rape prevention and education funding remain at half their authorized and needed levels; and funding for emergency shelters and other domestic violence services falls well below what is needed.

It is time that this nation devote the same amount of resources to ending a form of violence that terrorizes over half the world's population, as we provide to the global war

on terror. I have introduced legislative measures to address some of these issues.

The first is the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victims' Housing Act, H.R. 3752, which provides \$50 million in federal funds for transitional housing. Did you know that there are currently no federal dollars spent on transitional housing for domestic violence survivors - a service so critical if women and their children are to escape abuse and start new, safe, and economically self-sufficient lives on their own. We already have strong bipartisan support for this bill and over 100 cosponsors, so I will continue to work hard, along with my colleagues, to see that we get the resources that are desperately needed for transitional housing for domestic violence survivors.

I have also introduced the Battered Immigrant Family Relief Act, H.R. 3828. This bill allows immigrant women who have been abused to have access to needed social services and public assistance, such as TANF, Food Stamps, and Medicaid. As we saw in the House with the reauthorization of TANF, not everyone understands how critical it is that legal immigrants and their families, and especially immigrant women who are fleeing abusive partners, have access to public benefits. So I will be working especially hard to see that this happens.

Without your work and your dedication, day in and day out, there would be no hope. I am proud to commit myself as your ally and partner in this struggle to end violence against women. The fight is far from over. I thank all of you for making it a priority in your lives. Together we can eliminate violence against women.