

JANUARY 25, 2001

SCHAKOWSKY ADDRESSES NOW LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND ON CAPITOL HILL

WASHINGTON, D.C. - I want to begin by thanking NOW and all the advocates here today who worked tirelessly last session to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and to expand the protections VAWA provides victims of abuse.

Everyone here, with the help of the Clinton Administration, has worked hard to end an unjust system and help break the cycle of violence. Re-authorizing and expanding VAWA to a record \$3.33 billion is a major victory. Congress is once again sending a clear message to the nation that violence against women is not only wrong, it is a crime.

VAWA funding creates programs that supports the work of prosecutors, law enforcement officials, victim advocates, and health and social services professionals who are responding to the problems of violence against women and getting them to safety and protection.

I am additionally excited about the many provisions we were able to include from my Battered Immigrant Women's Protection Act and my bill on transitional housing. In the past, abusers were able to use immigration status as an extra tool of control, which was only made worse by changes in the immigration law in 1996. Not any more, under VAWA 2000, immigrant woman are empowered to leave their abusers, apply for their green card, and move towards economic self-sufficiency without having to endure another day of violence or being forced to leave the country.

I am also proud that I was able to contribute to the bill in another section, by getting \$25 million for transitional housing. It is essential women and children have a place to go after escaping their abuser. This, however, is not the full amount we asked for and I plan to seek more money for transitional housing needs.

This is a huge victory, but we must remember, our work is not finished. With the new Administration it will be harder to pass legislation we missed. We must continue to work together until we get the job done.