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**SCHAKOWSKY PROVISIONS TO PROTECT BATTERED IMMIGRANT WOMEN AND TO EXPAND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE VICTIMS PASSED HOUSE**

**INCLUDED IN BILL TO REAUTHORIZE VAWA AND TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN INTO SEX TRADE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Major provisions championed by U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) to expand legal protections for battered immigrant women and children and to fund transitional housing for domestic abuse victims were approved today by the House of Representatives. The provisions, similar to Schakowsky's Battered Immigrant Women Protection Act (H.R. 3083) and Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victims' Housing Act (H.R. 1352), were part of a larger bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act and to combat the international trafficking of women and children into the sex trade and slavery.

Due to recent changes in immigration laws and the expiration of a provision that permitted immigrants to stay in the United States while awaiting their green cards, abusive citizens and permanent residents have once again gained control over their spouse's immigration status. As a result, battered women who leave abusive relationships lose access to lawful immigration status and are forced to leave the United States in order to obtain lawful permanent residence.

"Immigrant women who endure abuse while they wait for their green cards can suffer even more if they speak out against their abusers. They can and will be deported. This means that if you don't have a green card, our domestic abuse laws offer you little or no protection," Schakowsky said.

"Today, we ended this injustice. Immigrant women will now be empowered to move away from their abusers. They will now have the support to build long-lasting economic self-sufficiency for themselves and their children. I am very pleased that provisions from my bill were included in this very important legislation to reauthorize VAWA and fight the trafficking of human beings," Schakowsky added.

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Provisions included in today's bill will allow battered immigrant self-petitioners to receive their lawful permanent residency status in the United States without having to travel abroad. Also, a new class of visas will be created to help battered immigrant women remain in the country. The maximum number of T visa's in any one year is 10,000. In addition, provisions will expand legal protections for battered immigrant women so that they may flee violent homes, obtain court protections, and cooperate in the criminal prosecution of their abusers without fear of deportation.

**The bill also included language similar to Schakowsky legislation, H.R. 1532. The legislation authorizes \$25 million for transitional housing for women and children fleeing domestic abuse.**

**"Victims of domestic violence are often asked why they don't just leave. The all too frequent reason is there is no safe place to go. That's is why it is a priority to provide women and children all the necessary assistance at their time of need," Schakowsky said.**