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SCHAKOWSKY JOINS MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS TO PROTEST SUPREME COURT DECISION ON VAWA

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today joined members of Congress and representatives of women's rights organizations to protest a Supreme Court decision that invalidates a provision of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).□

The Supreme Court struck down by a vote of 5-4 the ability of women who are raped to seek civil damages in federal court stating that sexual violence does not pose an impediment to the conduct of interstate commerce.□ The Justices ruled that Christy Brzonkala, a former Virginia Tech student, cannot pursue her federal lawsuit against two alleged rapists.□ The Supreme Court made its decision even though thirty-six state attorneys general filed briefs urging the Court to uphold this provision.

"This is an injustice.□ The Supreme Court, by the narrowest of margins, took away a right that women have been fighting to get for years - the right to seek civil damages in federal court under the interstate commerce clause. How dare they say that rape does not affect and restrict women's choices in jobs and travel?□ This conservative court is ignoring the facts, narrowly interpreting the law, and putting women at risk," Schakowsky said.

Schakowsky is the author of legislation that would expand VAWA.□ The Battered Immigrant Women Protection Act would expand and protect the rights of immigrant women who are victims of domestic abuse. The Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victims' Housing Act would expand housing opportunities for women and children fleeing domestic violence.

"Our work is cut out for us in Congress.□ We must reauthorize VAWA as soon as possible and go even further to ensure that women who are victims of abuse have the power to fight back," Schakowsky added.