



Kriss Worthington

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CONSENT CALENDAR

December 13, 2005

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Subject: Support a strong Violence Against Women Act of 2005

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Berkeley City Council support the National Organization of Women (NOW) in urging the U.S. Congress to immediately convene a conference committee to reauthorize the National Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 2005 in December. The Berkeley City Council also joins NOW in urging Congress to craft the strongest possible VAWA from both House and Senate bills – one that not only continues programs and services, but also addresses violence in our country's diverse cultural, religious, ethnic, age and ability communities.

BACKGROUND:

On Tuesday afternoon, October 4, the Senate passed its version of VAWA 2005, S. 1197, by a unanimous consent agreement. A less comprehensive version of VAWA 2005 passed the House of Representatives on September 28 as H.R. 3402, the Department of Justice's yearly authorizing and funding bill.

While the House version included reauthorization of crucial VAWA programs, at the last minute, the Republican leadership dropped important provisions dealing with immigrants and women of color. The Senate bill still includes many of these House-dropped provisions, but faced its own trimming as a key program was dropped that would have extended coverage for unemployment insurance to domestic violence survivors who lose their jobs as they hide or flee from violence.

A "conference committee" with representatives from both houses, must meet to work out the differences between the two bills and come up with one final bill. These meetings must be convened as quickly as possible because the ten-year-old Violence Against Women Act expired on September 30th and we must ensure that programs and services will not be denied, delayed or deferred.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

NONE

CONTACT PERSON:

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