



SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD  
**NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER**  
*Rise Up AND Act for Justice*

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## **Ensure Immigrant Survivors included in Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization**

“This week, the Senate hearing on reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act had good, positive energy with Senators on both sides of the aisle indicating support. It is important that we do not waste this moment. That we instead move forward expeditiously in respect of Domestic Violence Awareness Month,” said Fran Eskin-Royer, Executive Director of the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd (NAC).

“We are particularly concerned for those experiencing domestic violence who are uniquely vulnerable as immigrants where their immigration status is tied to their abuser,” said Eskin-Royer.

The Good Shepherd Services agency in Atlanta works closely with the immigrant community, and domestic violence is an issue of concern. One of the agency’s case workers noted that he works with “clients who are treated abusively by their spouses but can’t leave the marriage because their green card depends on it. They can get so depressed. They are afraid of their spouses and of having to return to their home countries.”

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Reauthorization has the potential to directly help, establishing a pilot program that will allow some immigrant domestic violence victims and their children to apply for lawful temporary status independent of their abusers.

Such a provision would help to save the lives of immigrant women experiencing domestic violence. VAWA Reauthorization was passed in the House earlier this year and includes a provision “establishing a 6-year pilot program allowing nonimmigrants authorized for employment under section 106 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1105a), and their children, to apply for lawful temporary status and travel authorization independent of the principal nonimmigrants to which their current status is or was tied...” according to the bill text.

“NAC calls on the Senate to prioritize the passage of the VAWA Reauthorization and include the provision protecting vulnerable immigrant spouses and children,” said Eskin-Royer.

For the women at Good Shepherd Services in Atlanta and for millions of domestic violence survivors around the country, let us do our part to act for justice, especially during Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

*[The National Advocacy Center](#) educates and advocates on social justice issues for the transformation of society to the benefit of all people reflecting the spirituality, history and mission of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. NAC advocates at the Federal level for people living in poverty, immigrants, survivors of human trafficking, survivors of domestic abuse, and other vulnerable populations.*

*The Sisters of the Good Shepherd was founded in France in 1835 and are in 70 countries on 5 continents and have had a presence in the United States for over 175 years. With a presence in 22 states and 1 U. S. Territory, the Sisters and their Lay Mission Partners have dedicated themselves to serving girls, women and families who experience poverty, exploitation, vulnerability and marginalization.*

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