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**Heller, Bipartisan Group of Senators Introduce Bill to Aid Victims of Domestic Violence**

*Proposal Funds Programs to Support Victims and Dependents, Emergency Shelters, Critical Helpline and More*

**WASHINGTON**– U.S. Senators Dean Heller (R-NV), Bob Casey (D-PA), Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Chris Coons (D-DE), and John Cornyn (R-TX) today announced that they have introduced legislation to aid victims by directing federal resources to emergency shelters, supportive programs, and the National Domestic Violence Hotline.  
  
Specifically, the legislation reauthorizes the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA), a historic law enacted in 1984 that directs funding to states and tribes to help provide supportive services such as shelter, counseling, legal assistance and more to victims of domestic abuse and their dependents. Additionally the bill funds prevention programs and 24-hour victim assistance through the National Domestic Violence Hotline, a toll-free helpline in which highly-trained advocates offer victims of relationship abuse assistance over the phone and through their website at <http://www.thehotline.org/>.  
  
“Sadly, my home state of Nevada has one of the highest rates of domestic violence-related homicides,”**said Senator Heller.**“We cannot stand by and allow these numbers to remain the same.  We must act to prevent these tragedies.  As a strong advocate for the victim assistance, victims’ rights, and safeguarding all Nevadans, I’m proud to introduce this bipartisan bill to fund life-saving programs to help victims and their dependents escape abuse. Congress can stand up for victims and against domestic violence by passing our bipartisan legislation. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that this important legislation becomes law.”

“Domestic violence has no place in our society and we owe it survivors to ensure that they have the resources they need,” **said Senator Casey.** “The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act authorizes critical programs to assist families in crisis, like the National Domestic Violence Hotline and grants that keep shelters open for survivors. To ensure that we can continue to most effectively assist survivors, I urge my colleagues to support swift passage of this reauthorization.”

“A home should provide safety and security.  Unfortunately, too many Americans face violence and intimidation at home, and carry the physical and emotional scars for years to come. This bipartisan legislation helps victims of domestic violence to heal by providing greater access to a safe haven and support services,” **said Senator Grassley.**

“The fight to end domestic violence is far from over. Domestic violence and sexual assault are evils that transcend race, class, gender and sexual orientation, and are present in every community in America. When we shine a light on these evils by educating the public, empowering the victims, and punishing the offenders, we can help break the cycle of abuse,” **said Senator Coons.** “A vital part in combating domestic violence is ensuring that survivors have all the services necessary to heal and recover.  I’m proud to support the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act. It’s up to all of us to educate, advocate, and work together and ensure that no woman, man, or child has to live in fear.”

“The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) staunchly advocates for the reauthorization of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA). As the only federal act solely dedicated to supporting domestic violence services, FVPSA helps ensure that victims have a safe place to go when they are escaping life-threating violence. Programs across the country depend on FVPSA funding to serve over 1.3 million victims a year. We applaud its bipartisan sponsors for their leadership and support,” **said Kim Gandy, president and chief executive officer of the National Network to End Domestic Violence.**

“The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act is the backbone of the nation’s response to domestic violence,” **said Esta Soler, president and founder of Futures Without Violence.** “Thank you Senators Heller and Casey for reintroducing this important legislation. Due to recent funding increases, FVPSA also now can better meet the needs of children who are in shelter or are witnessing domestic violence in their homes. This program is essential to breaking the often inter-generational cycle of violence and abuse.”

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