



The *History* of the Violence Against Women Act

- 1871** Alabama is the first state to rescind the legal right of men to beat their wives.
- 1967** One of the country's first domestic violence shelters opens in Maine.
- 1972** The nation's first emergency rape crisis line opens in Washington, D.C.
- 1975** Pennsylvania establishes the first state coalition against sexual assault, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape.
- 1976** Pennsylvania establishes the first state coalition against domestic violence, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and becomes the first state to pass legislation providing for orders of protection for battered women.
- La Casa de Las Madres* in San Francisco, California is opened. This was the first battered women's shelter established by women of color.
- 1977** The White Buffalo Calf Woman Society is founded at the Rosebud Sioux Reservation and is the first non-profit organization dedicated to advocacy on behalf of American Indian women who are victims of violence.
- Emerge, the first counseling program for men who batter, is founded in Boston, Massachusetts, at the request of women working in shelters.
- 1978** The National Coalition Against Sexual Assault is formed to combat sexual violence and promote services for rape victims.
- The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence is organized as the voice for the battered women's movement on the national level.
- U.S. Commission on Civil Rights holds a forum entitled *Consultation on Battered Women* in Washington, DC. The forum brings together hundreds of activists and results in *Battered Women: Issues of Public Policy*, which offers more than 700 pages of written and oral testimony.
- 1980** In October of 1980, the White Buffalo Calf Woman Society establishes the first domestic violence shelter on an Indian reservation in the U.S.

- 1981** The first annual Domestic Violence Awareness Week is celebrated.
- 1984** The Duluth Project is formed in Duluth, Minnesota, pioneers the first coordinated criminal justice response model to domestic violence.
- U.S. Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti establishes Department of Justice Task Force on Family Violence, which, for the first time in the Department's history, submits a report examining the scope and impact of domestic violence in America. The report also provides recommendations to improve the nation's law enforcement, criminal justice and community response to offenses that, previously, were considered "family matters."
- Congress passes the Family Violence Prevention Services Act – the first time federal funds are specifically designated for programs serving battered women and their children.
- 1985** U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop identifies domestic violence as a public health issue that cannot be dealt by the police alone.
- 1988** Congress amends the Victims of Crime Act, requiring state victim compensation programs to make awards to victims of domestic violence.
- 1990** U.S. Senator Biden introduces the first Violence Against Women Act.
- 1993** U.S. Senator Joseph Biden and the majority staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee conclude a three-year investigation into the causes and effects of violence against women. In his introduction to *Violence Against Women - The Response to Rape: Detours on the Road to Equal Justice* report, Senator Biden states, "Through this process, I have become convinced that violence against women reflects as much a failure of our nation's collective moral imagination as it does the failure of our nation's laws and regulations. We are helpless to change the course of this violence unless, and until, we achieve a national consensus that it deserves our profound public outrage.
- 1994** **U.S. Senator Joseph Biden sponsors legislation called the Violence Against Women Act, as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994.** The legislation passes with bipartisan support of 226 sponsors in the House and 68 in the Senate.
- September 13, 1994** **Violence Against Women Act is signed into law as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994.**
- Requires a *coordinated community response* to domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking crimes, encouraging jurisdictions to bring together multiple players to share experience and information and to use their distinct roles to improve community-defined responses.

- *Strengthens federal penalties for repeat sex offenders and included a federal “rape shield law,”* which is intended to prevent offenders from using victims’ past sexual conduct against them during a rape trial.
- Creates *full faith and credit provisions* requires states and territories to enforce protection orders issued by other states, tribes and territories.
- Creates *legal relief for battered immigrants* that made it more difficult for abusers to use immigration law to prevent victims from calling the police or seeking safety.
- Allows victims to seek *civil rights remedies* for gender-related crimes.¹

DOJ, HHS, and CDC grant programs under VAWA 1994 include:

DOJ: The STOP (Services*Training*Officers* Prosecutors) Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program, the Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies Program, the Rural Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Assistance Grant Program, and the STOP Violence Against Indian Women Discretionary Program (created from a statutory set-aside of STOP funds for Indian tribal governments).

HHS: VAWA authorizes funds to establish the National Domestic Violence Hotline and to support battered women's shelters, rape prevention education, and coordinated community responses to domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

1995

The **Violence Against Women Grants Office (VAWGO)** was created in January 1995 at the Department of Justice to oversee and implement grants programs and funding for victims’ services, allowing women to seek civil rights remedies for gender-related crimes, and provides training to increase police and court officials' sensitivity. The first VAWGO administrator is **Kathy Schwartz**.

1995

On March 21, 1995, President Clinton appoints **Bonnie Campbell** to head the U.S. Department of Justice's newly created **Violence Against Women Policy Office (VAWO)**.

Co-chairs Attorney General Janet Reno and Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala hold the first meeting of the joint U.S. Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women,.

¹The U.S. Supreme Court, in *United States v. Morrison*, 529 U.S. 598 (2000), held this provision unconstitutional.

- 1995** VAWGO makes the first VAWA grants under the STOP Formula Grant Program to States, and to Tribes under the STOP Violence Against Indian Women (STOP VAIW) Program.
- 1996** VAWGO makes the first awards under the Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies Program and Domestic Violence and Child Victimization Enforcement Grant Program (later called the Rural Assistance Grant Program).
- Funded by VAWA, the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE) begins operation and receives its first call on February 21st. The hotline answers 4,826 phone calls in the first month of operation.
- 1998** The Higher Education Amendments of 1998 authorizes the Grants to Combat Violent Crimes Against Women on Campus Program, administered by VAWGO.
- VAWGO makes the first awards under the Civil Legal Assistance to Victims Program.
- 1999** The VAWO Policy Office merges with VAWGO, creating the Violence Against Women Office (VAWO).
- VAWO makes the first awards under the Campus Program.
- October 28, 2000** President Bill Clinton signs the **Violence Against Women Act of 2000 (VAWA 2000)** into law (Division B of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000).
- VAWA 2000** reauthorizes critical grant programs, establishes new programs, and strengthens federal laws. VAWA 2000 emphasizes assisting immigrant victims, elderly victims, victims with disabilities, and victims of dating violence.
- *Funds new VAWO programs:* legal assistance for victims; grants to state coalitions; grants to tribal coalitions; grants to train law enforcement, prosecutors and courts on elder abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against individuals with disabilities; grants to provide supervised visitation and safe visitation exchange; and grants to address the need for services that are accessible to victims with disabilities.
 - *Adds “dating violence” to the purpose areas* of four VAWO grant programs.

- *Encourages the enforcement of protection orders and makes state and local courts eligible to receive Arrest grants. Grants recipients (under the Arrest program and STOP State Formula program) must certify that their laws, practices, and policies do not require victims to pay filing or service costs related to criminal domestic violence cases or protection orders.*
- *Allows STOP funds to be used to train sexual assault forensic medical personnel examiners.*
- *Expands interstate stalking laws to include interstate cyberstalking and added entering or leaving Indian country to the interstate domestic violence and stalking crimes created by VAWA.*
- *Expands battered immigrants' access to immigration relief.*

2001

President George W. Bush appoints **Diane Stuart** as Director of VAWO in October 2001.

VAWO makes the first awards under the State Coalitions and Tribal Coalitions programs.

2002

The name of the VAWO changes to the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW).

Legislation makes OVW a permanent part of the Department of Justice with a Presidentially-appointed, Senate-confirmed Director.

OVW makes the first awards under the Abuse in Later Life Program, Disabilities Program, and Supervised Visitation Programs.

2003

On February 3, 2003, President George W. Bush nominates **Diane Stuart** as Director of OVW. The U.S. Senate confirms her nomination in July.

The PROTECT Act is signed into law, and authorizes funding for OVW's Transitional Housing Assistance Program.

On August 2, the National Domestic Violence Hotline receives its one millionth call.

2005

OVW makes the first awards under the Transitional Housing Program.

2006

President George W. Bush signs the **Violence Against Women Act of 2005** (VAWA 2005) into law on January 5, 2006.

VAWA 2005 authorizes numerous new programs, with an increased emphasis on violence against Indian women, sexual assault, and youth victims.

New programs include: Court Training and Improvements, Children Exposed to Violence, Service to Respond and Advocate on Behalf of Youth, Engaging Men and Youth, Culturally and Linguistically Specific Services, and the Sexual Assault Services Programs.

The first OVW Tribal Consultation convenes with DOJ officials and tribal leaders in Prior Lake, MN.

2007 The National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline is launched and receives its first call on February 2007.

President George W. Bush nominates **Cindy Dyer** as Director of OVW. The U.S Senate confirms her on December 19, 2007.

OVW makes its first awards under the Grants to Indian Tribal Governments program, a more comprehensive tribal program that was authorized by VAWA 2005 and replaces the STOP VAIW program.²

2008 On September 30, the National Domestic Violence Hotline receives its two millionth call.

The Section 904 Violence Against Women in Indian Country Task Force holds its first meeting in Washington, DC.

February 19, 2009 The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides an additional \$225 million for OVW.

April 1, 2009 President Obama is the first U.S. President to declare April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

September 2009 OVW makes its first Sexual Assault Services Program formula and discretionary awards and the first Culturally and Linguistically Specific Services Program awards.

September 14, 2009 The White House, Department of Justice, and OVW commemorate the 15th anniversary of the passage of VAWA.

²The Tribal Governments program is funded by 10% set-asides from eight other OVW grant programs and a 7% set-aside from the LAV program. This was a significant increase from the STOP VAIW Program, which was funded by a 5% set aside from the STOP Program. The new Tribal Governments programs does not require tribes to provide matching funds and gives tribes greater flexibility on how the grant funds are spent.