

WASHINGTON – This week, **U.S. Rep. Richard Hanna** and 17 Republican Colleagues sent a letter to Speaker John Boehner and Majority Leader Eric Cantor urging that the House of Representatives reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

The Violence Against Women Act was first signed into law in 1994 and subsequently reauthorized in 2000 and 2005. The legislation is a vital resource for communities and organizations that help victims of sexual abuse and violence. During the 112th Congress, both the House of Representatives and Senate passed their own versions of VAWA but no final legislation was presented for a vote in either chamber. The signatories of this letter believe that this legislation should be advanced quickly to ensure the programs that rely up VAWA will not be put in jeopardy.

The full text of the letter to Speaker Boehner and Leader Cantor is as follows:

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Cantor:

We are writing to urge you to immediately reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). As you know, we are long overdue in passing a reauthorization of this landmark piece of legislation which seeks to reduce instances of domestic violence and protect women who are victims of such violence.

Over the course of the past several years, we have met with constituents in our districts who agree that VAWA programs are an important part of a larger criminal justice framework that seeks to reduce abuse against women and kids. We appreciate the need to make efficient and effective use of federal dollars, and believe that VAWA programs in our districts have met that threshold and have been a success in curbing domestic violence and supporting victims. Now is the time to seek bipartisan compromise on the reauthorization of these programs. VAWA programs save lives, and we must allow states and communities the opportunity to build upon the successes of current VAWA programs so that we can help even more people.

It is unfortunate that states are already preparing for Congress's inaction. In New Jersey, for example, the state legislature recently passed a bridge fund bill to fill the void left by a lack of

federal funds in the event VAWA is not reauthorized.

We believe a bipartisan plan to reauthorize VAWA is more important than ever. Last year, in a bipartisan letter many of us in the Republican Conference wrote to the Judiciary Committee, we said: "VAWA must reach all victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking in every community in the country." This statement still holds true, and underscores the need to reauthorize this critical legislation.□

Sincerely,

Signatories of this letter were: Congressmen Richard Hanna (NY), Rodney Davis (IL), Charlie Dent (PA), Rodney Frelinghuysen (NJ), Mike Fitzpatrick (PA), Jim Gerlach (PA), Chris Gibson (NY), Michael Grimm (NY), Richard Hanna (NY), David Joyce (OH), Leonard Lance (NJ), Frank LoBiondo (NJ), Patrick Meehan (PA), Shelly Moore-Capito (WV), Tom Reed (NY), Dave Reichert (WA), Jon Runyan (NJ), Lee Terry (NE) and Ted Poe (TX).