



GEORGIA COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**GCADV Applauds Representative McBath for Introduction of Bipartisan Legislation to Prevent Domestic Violence**

**Atlanta, GA** - The Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence applauds Rep. Lucy McBath for the introduction of the bipartisan *Family Violence Prevention and Services Improvement Act (FVPSA)*, H.R. 5041. FVPSA is the only federal funding stream solely dedicated to the support of emergency shelter and supportive services for survivors of domestic violence and their dependents. FVPSA is also intended to help states: raise public awareness about domestic violence; prevent its occurrence; and create, maintain, and expand services for victims of domestic violence and their dependents. FVPSA is a critical funding resource which ensures domestic violence coalitions such as GCADV can engage in statewide initiatives. McBath was joined by Representatives Gwen Moore (D-WI), Tom Cole (R-OK), and John Katko (R-NY) in introducing the measure.

"Domestic and family violence affects Americans across the country, and we must do all we can to keep children and families safe. This bill answers the call of state, local, and tribal leadership for more resources and increased funding as we work to end domestic violence." McBath said. "I would like to thank my Republican and Democratic colleagues who have joined me to help prevent violence, protect families, and care for survivors of domestic abuse."

The newly introduced legislation **meaningfully invests in prevention**, bringing evidence-informed, community-based prevention initiatives to more communities. "FVPSA funding is a critical need that helps GCADV and the programs that we support address the very root causes of intimate partner violence from both the statewide and community levels. In order to realize GCADV's vision of a *Georgia Free of Domestic Violence* we must determinedly work to make all Georgia communities peaceful" said Jan Christiansen, GCADV's Executive Director.

"FVPSA is a vital resource in the movement to prevent and end gender based violence" said Shenna Morris, GCADV's Policy & Community Engagement Director. "In order to exist in a world that is free from violence where all people can thrive, there must be support mechanisms in place, like FVPSA, that support culturally responsive and community informed solutions."

The local domestic violence programs in Georgia that receive FVPSA funding are able to provide shelter, counseling, and legal advocacy, among many other services and programs, to survivors. According to data provided by the Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, 45,715 domestic violence crisis line calls were answered in 2018. 46 state-certified domestic violence programs sheltered 6,151 survivors and their children. Yet, 2,753 survivors and their children were turned away from domestic violence shelters due to lack of bed space in 2018.

H.R. 5041, **increases the funding authorization level to \$252 million** to respond to low funding levels and provides access to FVPSA funds for programs not currently funded. The legislation also **creates a new underserved populations grant program** for family centers, youth centers, senior centers, community-based organizations or vocational organizations to meet the needs of survivors living at the margins, such as those living in rural communities, individuals with disabilities, older adults, those identifying with faith-based communities, youth and others; and **updates provisions and definitions** to ensure access to services for all survivors.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH) is funded through FVSPA. Georgia currently ranks tenth nationally for the rate at which men kill women in single-victim homicides, and 62 percent of these are domestic violence related murders. The state ranks seventh in terms of contact volume to NDVH. Roughly 66 percent of the Georgia NDVH contacts are from survivors who identify from an underserved/historically marginalized community.

FVPSA funding can be used to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services, outreach to increase domestic violence awareness and to increase accessibility of services. H.R. 5041, **strengthens and updates the National Domestic Violence Hotline and hotline services for underrepresented populations**, including American Indians, Alaskan Natives and Deaf victims of domestic and dating violence.

Additionally, the legislation **expands support and access for culturally-specific programs**. Culturally-specific organizations are better equipped to address the complex, multi-layered challenges facing victims from racial and ethnic minority populations as they seek services and protections from abuse. In Georgia, there are a number community-based organizations that provide much needed culturally responsive services. Traditionally, these organizations have been under-resourced. FVPSA funding is integral to providing domestic violence services to adequately serve these communities.

#### More About GCADV

*GCADV is Georgia's federally recognized domestic violence coalition, representing over 50 domestic violence organizations and programs across the state. Every day they motivate, inform, and connect with concerned stakeholders in an effort to achieve social and systems change on behalf of domestic violence survivors and their families. No one organization offers all of the solutions, but GCADV believes by coming together with a wide range of partners and creating new approaches, we can ensure that survivors are safe and empowered and healthy relationships are nurtured.*

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