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Violence Against Women: Federal Funding and Recent Developments

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SUMMARY

Each year women report approximately 500,000 rapes and sexual assaults, according to a recently designed Bureau of Justice Statistics survey. The extent and seriousness of the problem of violence against women first was addressed in 1990 by legislation proposing a federal response. Over the next several years, Congress began to address mounting public concern about gender-related crime, culminating in the enactment of new penalties under the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, and the establishment of several grant programs under its Title IV, the Violence Against Women Act (P.L. 103-322). Since passage of P.L. 103-322, Congress has been supportive regarding funding. In FY1997, Congress approved VAWA funding for selected programs at the Department of Justice at \$197.5 million and at the Department of Health and Human Services for \$61 million. In FY1998, Congress approved VAWA funding for selected programs at the Department of Justice at \$270.75 million and at the Department of Health and Human Services at \$154 million.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Justice Department has released new and more accurate data about the extent of violence against women, due to revisions in survey methodology. Although the data show a decrease in overall violent crimes between 1995 and 1996, including the category of rape (which represents completed rapes), there was no decline in attempted rape or sexual assault. Since FY1995, a major source of funding for programs to reduce these crimes has been grants under the Violence Against Women Act (P.L. 103-322, Title IV).¹

¹ For background information on violence against women, see: U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. *Violence Against Women: An Overview*. CRS Report 94-142 GOV, by Suzanne Cavanagh, Leslie Gladstone and David Teasley. Washington 1994. 19 p.; and *Domestic Violence: Data, Federal Programs, and Selected Issues*. CRS Report 95-865 EPW, by Dale Robinson. Washington 1995. 12 p.



Statistics

In 1994, the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) redesigned the *National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)* to obtain a more accurate reporting of incidents of rape and sexual assault. The *NCVS* obtains data about criminal activity from a nationally representative sample of U.S. households. Each year, interviews are conducted of every person aged 12 and over in these households to measure crime from the victim's perspective. This approach differs from that of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's *Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)*, which is based solely on crimes reported to the police. BJS statisticians caution that the redesign of the survey means that the data "are not directly comparable to earlier estimates."² In addition, they note that despite their effort to obtain new information, those women surveyed may still be reluctant to provide information due to "the private nature of the event, the perceived stigma and the belief that no purpose would be served in reporting the crime"³

Based upon a nationally representative sample of U.S. households, the BJS reported the following findings:

- "Women age 12 or older annually sustained almost 5 million violent victimizations in 1992 and 1993. About three-quarters of all lone-offender violence against women and 45 % of violence multiple-offenders was perpetrated by offenders whom the victim knew. In 29% of all violence against women by a lone offender, the perpetrator was an intimate (husband, ex-husband, boyfriend or ex-boyfriend).
- Women were about 6 times more likely than men to experience violence committed by an intimate.
- Women annually reported about 500,000 rapes and sexual assaults to interviewers. Friends or acquaintances of the victims committed over half of these rapes or sexual assaults. Strangers were responsible for about 1 in 5.
- Women of all races were about equally vulnerable to violence by an intimate.
- Among victims of violence committed by an intimate, the victimization rate of women separated from their husbands was about 3 times higher than that of divorced women and about 25 times higher than that of married women. Because the *NCVS* reflects a respondent's marital status at the time of the interview, which is up to 6 months after the incident, it is possible that separation or divorce followed the violence.

² U.S. Department of Justice. Press Release: Women Usually Victimized by Offenders They Know. August 16, 1995. p. 3.

³ Ibid., p. 4.

- Female victims of violence by an intimate were more often injured by the violence than females victimized by a stranger."⁴

The *UCR* reported 95,769 forcible rapes in 1996, a 1.7% decrease from the previous year, and the lowest total since 1989. The 1996 count was 12% lower than the 1992 level but 5% higher than the 1987 amount.⁵ Also, during 1996, 3,631 women were victims of murder, and of these 30% were murdered by their husbands or boyfriends.⁶

LEGISLATION

Legislation proposing a federal response to the problem of violence against women was first introduced in 1990. Over the next several years, congressional actions to address public concerns about gender-related violence culminated in the enactment of new penalties under the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, and the establishment of several grant programs under its Title IV, the Violence Against Women Act (P.L. 103-322).⁷

FY1998 Funding Under the Violence Against Women Act

The Violence Against Women Act creates a number of new grant programs.⁸ Within the Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice, a new Violence Against Women Office was created to administer these programs, with former Iowa Attorney General Bonnie Campbell as director.⁹

For FY1998, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) received an appropriation of \$1.2 million for the National Domestic Violence Hotline to be administered by the Department of Health and Human Services. In addition, the Department of Justice (DoJ) will administer an appropriation of \$26 million, to be used for law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services grants to reduce violence against women.

On March 21, 1995, DoJ announced the initiation of the STOP—Services, Training, Officers, Prosecutors—Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program. As of April 1996, DoJ has awarded approximately \$426,000 to each state. Funds are to be distributed upon receipt of the various states' implementation plans. Funds

⁴ Quoted from U.S. Department of Justice. Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Violence against Women: Estimates from the Redesigned Survey*. Washington, August 1995. p. 1.

⁵ U.S. Department of Justice. Federal Bureau of Investigation. *Uniform Crime Reports, 1993*. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1996. p. 24.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 17.

⁷ See: U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. *Crime Control: Summary of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994*. Report No. 94-910. Coordinated by Charles Doyle. Washington 1994. pp. 32-48.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-38.

⁹ Justice Information Electronic Newsletter, Vol. 1. April 1, 1995. Program guidelines and application kits may be obtained from the Department of Justice Response Center, 1-800-421-6770.

are to be allocated as follows: 25% to law enforcement, 25% to prosecution, and 25% to nonprofit victim services. The rest is to be allocated at the state's discretion but within the parameters of the Act.

States must (1) certify that all out-of-pocket costs for forensic medical examinations of victims of sexual assaults are paid by the state, local government, or other government entity; (2) certify that victims of domestic violence are exempt from paying costs associated with filing criminal charges or issuing or serving a warrant, protection order, or witness subpoena for a domestic violence offence; and (3) assure that it will be in compliance with the above requirements by September 13, 1996 or at the end of the next legislative session, whichever is later.¹⁰

Recent Developments Within the 105th Congress

With the completion of the FY1998 appropriations process, Congress has approved amounts for VAWA programs under two federal departments. The total for VAWA programs in the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs was \$270.75 million and for the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, together with its Center for Disease Control and Prevention, was \$144 million. Not all of the programs enacted under VAWA have been funded continuously since 1995; some have received money for a brief period only, while others never have been funded. (For funding details, see Table 1 on p. 5-6.)

The FY1998 appropriations bill for Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (H.R. 2264, P.L. 105-78) was signed by President Clinton on November 13, 1997. The FY1998 appropriations bill for Commerce, Justice, State (H.R. 2267, P.L. 105-119), was signed by the President on November 22, 1997.

¹⁰ Ibid.

TABLE 1. Violence Against Women Program Funding, FY1995–FY1998
(budget authority in millions)

Program	Admin. Agency	FY1995 Enacted	FY1996 Enacted	FY1997 Enacted	FY1998 Request	FY1998 Enacted
Law Enforcement and Prosecution Grants (Sec. 40121)	OJP	26.00	130.00	145.00	160.00	172.00
Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies (Sec. 40231)	OJP	0	28.00	33.00	59.00	59.00
Rural Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Enforcement (Sec. 40295)	OJP	0	7.00	8.00	15.00	25.00
Court Appointed Special Advocates for Victims of Child Abuse (Sec. 40156a)	OJP	0	6.00	6.00	7.00	7.00
Training for Judicial Personnel and Practitioners for Victims of Child Abuse (Sec. 40156b)	OJP	0	0.75	1.00	2.00	2.00
Grants for Televised Testimony by Victims of Child Abuse (Sec. 40156c)	OJP	0	0.05	0.55	1.00	1.00
National Stalker and Domestic Violence Reduction Grants (Sec. 40603)	OJP	0	1.50	1.75	2.75	2.75
Training Programs for Probation and Parole Officers Who Work With Released Sex Offenders (Sec. 40152)	OJP	0	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00
National Study on Campus Sexual Assault (Sec. 40506)	OJP	0	0	0.20	0	0
State Databases Studies (Sec. 40292)	OJP	0	0.20	0	0	0
Federal Victim Counselors (Sec. 40114)	USA	0	0	1.00	1.00	.85
<i>Subtotal: Department of Justice</i>		26.00	174.50	197.50	249.75	270.75
Training Judges/Court Personnel (Sec. 40421-22)		0	0	0	0	0
<i>Subtotal: The Judiciary</i>		0	0	0	0	0
Equal Justice for Women in Courts/Training Grants (Sec. 40411-14)		0	0	0	0	0
<i>Subtotal: State Justice Institute</i>		0	0	0	0	0
National Domestic Violence Hotline (Sec. 40211)	ACF	1.00	0.40	1.20	1.20	1.20
Grants to Reduce Sexual Abuse of Runaway, Homeless, and Street Youth (Sec. 40155)	ACF	0	5.56	8.00	15.00	15.00

Program	Admin. Agency	FY1995 Enacted	FY1996 Enacted	FY1997 Enacted	FY1998 Request	FY1998 Enacted
Grants for Battered Women Shelters (Sec. 40241)	ACF	0	15.00	10.80	70.00	76.80
Youth Education and Domestic Violence (Sec. 40251)	ACF	0	0.40	0.40	0	0
National Number and Cost of Injuries Study (Sec. 40293) ¹	CDC	0	0.10	0	0	0
Rape Prevention and Education Grants (Sec. 40151) ¹	CDC	0	28.54	35.00	45.00	45.00
Community Programs on Domestic Violence (Sec. 40261) ¹	CDC	0	3.00	6.00	0	6.00
<i>Subtotal: Department of Health and Human Services¹</i>		1.00	54.00	61.00	131.2	144.00
Safety for Women: Capital Improvements to Prevent Crime in National Parks (Sec. 40132)		0	0	0	0	0
Safety for Women: Capital Improvements to Prevent Crime in Public Parks (Sec. 40133)		0	0	0	0	0
<i>Subtotal: Department of the Interior</i>		0	0	0	0	0
Safety for Women: Capital Improvements to Prevent Crime in Public Transportation (Sec. 40131)		0	0	0	0	0
<i>Subtotal: Department of Transportation</i>		0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total		27.00	228.5	258.5	381	415.6

Source: For FY1997 and FY1998 totals, see the Commerce, Justice, State Act (P.L. 105-119) and the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Act (P.L. 105-78). Also, see the tables provided in the *Congressional Record*: Nov. 13, 1997, pp. H10921-929; and Nov. 7, 1997, pp. 10243-303, respectively.

Abbreviations to TABLE 1.

ACF Administration for Children and Families
 CDC Centers for Disease Control
 OJP Office of Justice Programs
 USA United States Attorneys

NOTE: This table originally appeared in the following CRS report. U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. Domestic Violence: Data, Federal Programs, and Selected Issues. CRS Report 95-865 EPW, by Dale Robinson. Washington, August 3, 1995.