

Appendix 4-W

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NEWS RELEASE

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New INS Telephone Information Line for Battered Immigrants Beginning September 1

SEATTLE — As part of its ongoing efforts to improve customer service, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) today announced that beginning September 1, 2000, it will provide a new telephone information line — 802-527-4888 — designed specifically to assist battered immigrants seeking to self-petition for permanent resident status.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) allows abused spouses and children of citizens or legal permanent residents to self-petition for legal permanent resident status. They are not forced to rely on an abuser to remain in the United States. The telephone service — called VAWA Information Line — will provide recorded information about the application filing process and updates on self-petitioning issues to applicants, attorneys, service providers and others assisting battered immigrants. It also will allow callers to leave messages, which INS staff will retrieve and respond to promptly.

Karen FitzGerald, Assistant Director, INS Office of Programs, Washington, DC, and Richard Crandlemire, Assistant Center Director, INS Vermont Service Center, announced the new service at the annual meeting of the National Network for Battered Immigrant Women in Seattle, Washington. They reiterated agency expectations that this information line will be a useful resource, opening new channels of communication for this vital program.

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