

# **Voters Say, “Fix VAWA Now!”**

How many times have you heard of a well-intentioned government program that ended up doing more harm than good? The Violence Against Women Act has sadly become one of the most harmful and costly laws on the books:

## **1. Fails to Help Victims of Violence**

Men and women are equally likely to abuse. Numerous studies have shown abuse-reduction programs are flatly ineffective, and sometimes harmful. A recent Harvard University study found that mandatory arrest laws *increase* partner homicides by 54%.

*“We have no evidence to date that VAWA has led to a decrease in the overall levels of violence against women.” — Angela Moore Parmley, PhD, Department of Justice*

## **2. Mistreats Women**

Women complain that abuse shelter staff are often unqualified and do not allow women to bring their adolescent male children.

One recent report, “Congressional Guidelines for Abusing Women,” reveals how abuse shelters bar residents from going to work, force women to attend shelter-sponsored “socials,” and subject them to sexual harassment.

*“I thought the system was there to help me, but instead it ended up becoming my greatest enemy.” — Sarah McPherson, victim of domestic violence*

## **3. Harms Families**

Domestic violence programs ban couples from getting partner counseling or mediation. The couple is pressured to separate and divorce, even if the alleged abuse is one-time or minor.

### **Women’s Groups Criticize VAWA**

Women’s groups are saying domestic violence laws are hurting more than they help:

- *Independent Women’s Forum:* “Men may become alienated from and hostile to the system in the conviction that it is stacked against them and unjustly favors women.”
- *Ms. Foundation for Women:* “Involvement with the criminal legal system has not been a positive or helpful experience;...some women are actively harmed.”

## **4. Costs Taxpayers Billions of \$\$\$**

Each year the federal government spends \$1 billion for domestic violence programs and services. These programs often turn away victims of abuse, promote family break-up, and force children to grow up in a single-parent household.

The resulting social pathologies – juvenile delinquency, teenage pregnancy, and the like -- cost taxpayers many billions of dollars each year.

## **5. Promotes False Allegations**

The Violence Against Women Act uses such a broad definition of “violence” that false allegations are often made to gain an unfair edge in court.

*Talk-show host David Letterman was charged with domestic violence. He had allegedly harassed a New Mexico woman he had never met by sending her mental telepathic messages.*

## **6. Hurts Black Communities**

As a result of mandatory arrest laws that disregard the civil rights of the accused, African-American communities have been disproportionately affected.

*“Criminalization of social problems has led to mass incarceration of men, especially young men of color.” — Ms. Foundation for Women*

## **The Time for Reform is Now**

The domestic violence industry doesn’t care that American families are being harmed by false allegations of abuse, and is no longer responsive to the needs of victims.

*Tell your elected officials, “Fix VAWA Now!”*



**Respecting Accuracy in Domestic Abuse Reporting**

*A coalition of over 100 organizations has come together to make VAWA effective for victims and safe for families:  
[www.mediadar.org/docs/VAWA-Resolution.pdf](http://www.mediadar.org/docs/VAWA-Resolution.pdf)*

*For more information, contact:  
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Reporting  
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