

Violence Against Women in the Overseas American Population

VAWA, The Violence Against Women Act of 2000, was the first comprehensive federal legislation responding to violence against women in the United States. This program continues to provide millions of much-needed dollars per year in funding to help domestic violence agencies serve victims in the USA. While we support and applaud VAWA legislation, to date, no VAWA funding has been allocated to serve the population of Americans living overseas.

Americans who go to live in foreign countries and find themselves victims of domestic violence and their children victims of child abuse are often isolated, don't speak the native language, are subject to systemic abuse and may be out of status?. While all domestic violence victims face obstacles, Americans living in foreign countries face additional layers of complexities in their efforts to free themselves from violent homes.

In response to the need for a domestic violence service specifically serving overseas American communities, an international toll-free domestic violence and child abuse hotline, 866-USWOMEN, was launched in 2001 by the American Domestic Violence Crisis Line, a non-profit organization based in Portland, Oregon. This organization has grown from a small grassroots effort serving a handful of abused American women, to a network serving hundreds annually. The demand for services is outstripping the organization's financial resources.

The American Domestic Violence Crisis Line works specifically with abused American women and children in foreign countries to provide support, advocacy resources and tools so that they can navigate the complicated jurisdictional, legal & social landscapes abroad, to be able to live their lives free of abuse either in the foreign country or back in the United States.

We advocate specific VAWA funding to serve domestic violence and child abuse victims in the Overseas American population, including funds for direct operation of the crisis line and funds for outreach efforts to assist American victims in need outside of the United States.



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