

# INTERNATIONAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT OF 2015

(H.R. 1340/ S. 713) Preventing violence against women and girls overseas



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

## **We urge members of Congress to co-sponsor the International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA). This legislation will:**

- ◆ **Make permanent the Office of Global Women's Issues in the State Department, as well as the position of ambassador-at-large for global women's issues, responsible for coordinating policies, programs and funding related to gender integration and women's empowerment across various U.S. government agencies and internationally.**
- ◆ **Enable the U.S. government to develop faster and more efficient responses to violence against women in humanitarian emergencies, conflict situations and development programs. Since this legislation is aimed at coordinating and integrating existing programs, it does not require additional funding.**
- ◆ **Increase legal and judicial protections to prevent and respond to all forms of gender-based violence and increase health sector capacity to assess the impact of violence on one's health.**
- ◆ **Focus on reducing the vulnerability of women and girls to violence by improving their economic status and educational opportunities.**
- ◆ **Support public awareness programs to change attitudes.**

### **Why I-VAWA matters**

Around the world, one in three women experience physical, sexual and psychological violence in their lifetime.

Violence against women and girls is harm against God's good creation. It forces individuals into trauma and sometimes death, and it breaks down familial and social relationships. One significant social harm is the effect of violence against women on local and national economies. For example, conservative estimates of lost productivity as a result of gender-based violence range between 1.2 and 2 percent of GDP in Brazil, Tanzania and Bangladesh. Families are likely to experience increased food insecurity as a result of reduced productivity, including farming. Furthermore, gender-based violence exposes those affected to illness and injuries, making it difficult for them to work and care for their families. Consequently, gender-based violence hampers women's ability to participate in the political, social and economic spheres of society.

### **Our Lutheran voice**

The ELCA continues to speak out on issues of gender-based violence in many ways, including through [education](#) on combatting domestic and sexual violence. Together with our partners, we are committed to seeking justice for women who face gender-based violence.

As Lutherans, we believe that because God redeems us through Jesus Christ, we are likewise called to "[create the conditions in our families, our schools, our workplaces, our churches and our city streets in which people are genuinely safe.](#)" The ELCA Church Council called for a [social message on gender-based violence](#) in order to further our capacity to create safe and healthy communities.

We recognize the passage of the [International Violence Against Women Act](#) as an important opportunity for our nation to collectively take steps toward creating safe conditions for women throughout the world.

**ELCA Justice for Women:** [www.elca.org/justiceforwomen](http://www.elca.org/justiceforwomen); **Women of the ELCA:** [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org)

**Take action now!** [www.ELCA.org/advocacy](http://www.ELCA.org/advocacy)  **ELCA Advocacy**  **@ELCAadvocacy**

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