

manage the eight-member agencies, along with an additional 15 user agencies from surrounding areas. Jeffcom 911 staff persevered through over 25,000 hours of overtime to provide additional training, lectured courses, and individual observation to produce, cultivate, and develop a qualified workforce capable of providing professional support required by the agencies Jeffcom 911 serves 24 hours a day.

Jeffcom 911 commenced operations on April 4, 2018 and is now the single Public Safety Answering Point in Jefferson County, serving a community of 600,000 citizens and covering 774 square miles that range from densely populated metropolitan areas to mountainous landscapes.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Jefferson County Communications Center Authority for this well-deserved recognition.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN  
REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2019

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 3, 2019*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1585) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, and for other purposes:

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Chair, today I will vote to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), historic landmark legislation with a proven track record of assisting abused and battered women. VAWA must be reauthorized.

As a matter of fact, I was the prime author of the law that provided for the first reauthorization of the VAWA in 2000—a five-year \$3.3 billion comprehensive program that was part of my anti-trafficking law, the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act (PL 106–386/TVPA).

Today, I will vote to ensure that VAWA reauthorization overcomes expected difficulties in the Senate and moves to enactment. I will vote to reauthorize, through 2020, critical VAWA programs: legal assistance for victims; addressing housing needs for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking; grants to combat violent crimes on campuses; grants to encourage arrest policies and enforcement of protection orders; grants for enhanced training and services to end abuse later in life.

I will also vote to extend: the critical STOP grants to educate and train law enforcement personnel to address sexual assault; the CHOOSE grants, i.e. Creating Hope Through Outreach, Options, Service, and Education for Children and Youth; training and services to end violence against people with disabilities; the sexual assault services program; rural domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking and child abuse enforcement assistance; grants for strengthening the healthcare system's response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking; as well as extending other key programs.

This is consistent with my long record of support for VAWA.

I strongly supported passage of VAWA when it was first introduced in 1993, and again

in 1994, when this crucial legislation was signed into law. I have supported multiple re-authorizations of VAWA, and I continue to strongly support this law as it was originally intended.

As I said earlier, I was the prime author of the law that provided for the first reauthorization of the VAWA in 2000 when I included the five-year \$3.3 billion comprehensive program in my Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act (PL 106–386/TVPA).

I also cosponsored the 2005 reauthorization, fought to ensure these programs are fully funded to assist the maximum number of victims, and voted for seven of the first seven VAWA reauthorization bills offered through 2012.

Two versions of VAWA reauthorization are under consideration by the House today. As I noted, the version I will support extends the VAWA until 2020. The other—H.R. 1585—weakens several carefully crafted protections for women and girls.

By granting biological men—who self-identify as women—access to women's shelters, H.R. 1585 removes the hard-fought gains to protect women and girls from abuse and to provide them with physical, emotional and psychological security.

Under the current version of H.R. 1585, women will no longer have a secure place of their own as they flee from male-inflicted physical and emotional abuse and intimidation.

Rather, these heroic women will now have to share their place of refuge, a shelter previously reserved for women seeking protection from male abusers, with biological men who self-identify as women.

Mr. Chair, these brave women and children deserve a place where they can feel protected and secure, so they can begin the difficult process to heal as they deal with post-traumatic stress. Forcing them to share a shelter and its facilities, including showers and sleeping areas, with biological men who self-identify as women will cause these women and children to experience insecurity, discomfort, confusion, and fear of additional assault.

VAWA has always prioritized the challenges and unique needs of battered women and children but this version, if passed, no longer will.

These women's shelters—there are about 1,500 nationwide—offer a safe space where a woman does not have to fear or worry about violence and intimidation and instead allows her to take steps toward rebuilding her life.

Mr. Chair, we must first and foremost protect victims of violence.

I oppose this provision of H.R. 1585 out of genuine concern for the women and children who are forced to flee to domestic abuse shelters and base my concern on evidence from California.

In late 2018, nine female victims residing in a women's shelter in Fresno, California—Naomi's House, operated by Poverello House—filed a lawsuit against the shelter for admitting a biological man because he had self-identified as a woman. These victims stated that they had been sexually harassed by this biological man. They said that he had made “sexual advances” on them and would “stare and leer” and make “sexually harassing comments about their bodies” while they were forced to undress in the same room with him.

After repeatedly confronting the staff of Naomi's House—both verbally and in writing—with their extreme discomfort, these women were

told that they would be expelled from the shelter if they refused to comply.

Mr. Chair, if we allow biological men who self-identify as women to receive access to these women-only shelters, abused women and children will lose the ‘safe space’ they so desperately need.

These victims deserve better. They deserve our protection and support. We must work to ensure the safety of women, girls, and children.

Other shelters designed to help victims of diverse sexual orientations and identities who are victims of domestic abuse ought to be considered by separate legislation.

We can, and we must create bipartisan legislation which seeks to protect all women and girls, as this law originally intended.

We can, and must, do better.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN  
REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2019

SPEECH OF

**HON. ANN WAGNER**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 3, 2019*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1585) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, and for other purposes:

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Chair, I rise today to speak about the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, or VAWA.

For the last several decades VAWA has been a positive force in our nation for the protection of some of our most vulnerable populations. Providing grants to domestic violence organizations, increasing access to housing for survivors, supporting law enforcement, addressing the scourge of sex trafficking, and reducing the rape kit backlog—these are just some of the ways VAWA has helped victims of violence in our communities.

While this should be a bipartisan effort to reauthorize VAWA, the new Democratic majority here in the House has decided to insert provisions into the legislation that advance a political agenda at the expense of sexual assault and domestic violence survivors.

Because of the importance of reauthorizing VAWA and protecting vulnerable women across the nation, I will still be supporting final passage of the Democrat-authored bill. The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey has found that over 43 percent of women experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetime. Sexual and domestic violence are pervasive problems and reauthorizing VAWA is critical to the fight against these crimes.

However, I wanted to take a minute to highlight some of the provisions included in this legislation that I remain firmly opposed to, and would vote against if given the opportunity.

Fourth Amendment due process rights and the protection of our Second Amendment rights are inherent rights that should not be infringed upon lightly. Ensuring that due process rights are protected prior to removal of fundamental constitutional rights should not be up for debate.

The majority, however, has done just that in their version of VAWA before us today.