

Prepared Opening Statement by U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa  
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Hearing on Renewing and Strengthening the Violence Against Women Act  
Tuesday, October 5, 2021

I want to welcome everyone to our hearing on the *Violence Against Women Act*, or VAWA. I supported the enactment of the original *Violence Against Women Act* in 1994 and have voted to reauthorize the grant programs authorized by VAWA multiple times. When I wasn't able to support a Democrat-led effort to reauthorize, I [introduced](#) my own proposal that would have protected and enhanced the program. This year, I again led my colleagues in sending a [letter](#) to Senate appropriations leaders, urging that Congress continue to prioritize funding of VAWA programs. In previous years, when I sent similar letters to the appropriators, Senators Shelby and Leahy were incredibly responsive to my requests and supportive of these programs, so I want to thank them for working with me to champion their funding.

As a member of this Committee, I've made it a [top priority](#) to champion [related measures](#) to expand rights and services for victims of intimate partner violence. This year, for example, I joined a number of committee members in cosponsoring [legislation](#) to ensure that the Crime Victims Fund will receive an additional \$1 billion in deposits each and every year. Services to victims and survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault and child abuse are accorded priority in funding, under the *Victims of Crime Act*, which created this important fund. [In 2016](#) and [again this year](#), I also worked closely with a young sexual assault survivor, Amanda Nguyen, and the organization she founded on bills to enhance the rights of sexual violence survivors in the criminal justice system.

In early 2018, I led this Committee's efforts to [press the FBI](#) for information on its response to allegations of sexual abuse, lodged by Olympic athletes against their former team doctor. I've been [seeking justice](#) for the victims of Larry Nassar's abuse, and I have some timely questions for DOJ, who [refused to attend our hearing](#) last month, about [accountability](#) for those who [failed these victims](#). As the former chairman of this Committee, I also worked closely with Senator Feinstein on [legislation](#) to impose a mandatory reporting requirement on coaches and instructors who witness abuse when working with young athletes.

I also sponsored and led this committee in approving [legislation](#) to renew and update the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act* – as many [victims](#) of sex trafficking also are victims of intimate partner violence. I worked with Sen. Cornyn on the [Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act](#), shepherding it through this Committee and the Senate. And I led our Committee in approving a measure, sponsored by former Senator Hatch, to make more resources available to victims of child pornography.

Renewing and extending the *Violence Against Women Act* is our next priority, and that's why we've convened today's hearing. Before we begin, I want to take this opportunity to mention that it's important that we adopt short term extensions of VAWA, while bipartisan VAWA reauthorization negotiations take place. I also want to recognize several of my Republican colleagues, who are not members of our committee but have joined us on a members' panel to express their support for VAWA and share their views on the reauthorization. Senators Ernst, Hyde Smith and Capito, I thank you for being here. I'd also like to thank Ms. Monaco for attending today on behalf of the Department of Justice.

