

Statement of
The Honorable Russ Feingold

United States Senator
Wisconsin
June 10, 2009

Statement of U.S. Senator Russell D. Feingold at the
Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing entitled
"The Continued Importance of the Violence Against Women Act"
Wednesday, June 10, 2009

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this important hearing. I am a longtime supporter of the Violence Against Women Act and have worked for years to ensure that its programs are fully funded. VAWA initiatives play a critically important role in combating domestic and sexual violence but, as today's testimony will point out, there is still much work to be done. Despite the enactment of this important law in 1994 and its reauthorization in 2000 and 2005, violence against women remains pervasive in our country.

I am pleased that Congress provided additional funding for VAWA and other victims services programs earlier this year. It is estimated that my state of Wisconsin will receive more than \$2.5 million in grants to improve responses to violent crimes against women and assist victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking who are in need of transitional housing, short-term housing assistance, and related support services.

It is no secret that in times of economic distress, domestic violence becomes more pervasive. Because of that fact, while I fully recognize that tough decisions need to be made about spending federal dollars, I am pleased that this Congress decided to put its support behind VAWA initiatives. A commitment from Congress to continue to support this program is essential. The statistics of victimization, many of which will be presented here today, are staggering. I look forward to the testimony of today's witnesses, which I am confident will shine more light on this important issue, and prompt new ideas for how Congress can continue to help victims of domestic violence.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.