



**Empowering Youth to End
Domestic Violence**

December 23, 2005

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Biden,

Break the Cycle is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to engage, educate and empower youth to build lives and communities free from dating and domestic violence. Break the Cycle furthers this mission by providing young people, ages 12 to 22, with preventive law-based education, free legal services, advocacy and support.

On behalf of the youth that we work with, we would like to thank you for your efforts toward the passage of the Violence Against Women Act of 2005. We know that it is only through your leadership that this critical legislation was able to move through Congress this year. Because of your commitment to this issue, and the diligence of your staff, the tremendously successful Violence Against Women Act has been reauthorized for another five years and expanded in key ways.

As an organization attuned to the unique needs of children, teens and young adults, we would like to particularly thank you for including the essential new programs that focus resources on preventing violence and providing services, protections and justice for young victims of violence. As you know, girls and young women between 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence, and young people under the age of 18 account for 67% of all sexual assaults reported to law enforcement. The reauthorization of VAWA under H.R. 3402 brings long-needed attention to this violence witnessed and experienced by children and youth. Responding to their needs is a critical step in increasing the safety of individuals and families.

We would also like to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of your staff with respect to this bill. In particular, Louisa Terrell has done a remarkable job of balancing all of the various concerns and crafting an exceptional bill. We appreciate her responsiveness to the issues that we raised. Her skill and dedication is admirable.

Thank you again for your leadership on this critical piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Juley Fulcher
Director of Public Policy &
Director of the Washington, DC Office