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House Passes Fully Inclusive Violence Against Women Act

February 28, 2013—Marking an important victory for all Americans in the fight against domestic violence, the National LGBT Bar Association applauds the authorization of an inclusive Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), approved in the House today.

“The National LGBT Bar Association represents countless prosecutors, judges and advocates who have seen firsthand how domestic violence affects individuals regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. We are grateful that the Violence Against Women Act will now be a powerful tool to protect our community and ensure justice is served,” said D’Arcy Kemnitz, executive director of the National LGBT Bar Association.

“It is unfortunate, but we know that our community is not immune to domestic violence, and for too long LGBT people have faced discrimination when they sought help. More than 61% of LGBT survivors reported being turned away from domestic violence shelters, and 85% of service providers working with LGBT victims of violence have observed discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity. With the passage of VAWA, we are hopeful that no survivor will ever again be further victimized by the system intended to help them recover.”

The Act, first introduced in 1994, helps individuals who have been victims of domestic violence by providing funding for shelters, investigation and prosecution of violent crime, and increased education for the courts and law enforcement on how to address domestic violence. The newly reauthorized Violence Against Women Act includes vital LGBT-inclusive provisions to promote access to justice and resources for all victims without the threat of discrimination.

The National LGBT Bar Association is a national association of lawyers, judges and other legal professionals, law students, activists and affiliated lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender legal organizations. The LGBT Bar promotes justice in and through the legal profession for the LGBT community in all its diversity.

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