

HARTFORD – Today **Congressman John B. Larson** (CT-01) hosted a domestic violence roundtable discussion focused on the importance of reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which is set to expire at the end of the month.

Enacted in 1994 to improve the way our country responds to domestic violence and sexual assault, VAWA established new federal crimes of interstate domestic violence and stalking, doubled penalties for repeat sex offenders, and sparked the passage of laws at the state level to protect victims. The bill also funds grant programs to help the victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Since the passage of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994, rates of domestic violence have decreased by over 50 percent.

“These programs provide advocacy for people who would normally not come forward,” Congressman Larson said. “I am so proud of Connecticut’s efforts in regards to preventing domestic violence. Renewing VAWA is critical to the sustained success of these efforts and it must be a priority for Congress.”

Larson’s roundtable discussion focused on how federal VAWA funds assist victims of domestic violence. Services funded include counseling, legal guidance for divorce procedures, restraining orders, assistance with custody procedures, alternative housing, and help ensuring safety.

The discussion was led by **Karen Jarmoc, interim Executive Director of the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV)** and Congressman Larson. Other panel members included staff from Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc. and Hartford Interval House. All three organizations benefit from the funds that are provided by VAWA to help victims of domestic violence.

“Today’s roundtable underscores the critical need for VAWA reauthorization so that Connecticut’s comprehensive response to victims stays strongly in place,” said Jarmoc. “Connecticut has one of the most comprehensive domestic violence response programs in the nation. Without the renewal of VAWA, many of these programs will see detrimental effects.”

Recently Congressman Larson was honored as a member of the “First 100,” an award presented by the CCADV to the first 100 men who showed a commitment to ending domestic violence in Connecticut.

“I will continue to fight hard in Washington, not only for the renewal of VAWA, but in the fight to end to scourge of domestic violence as well,” said Congressman Larson.

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