

A Policy Analysis of the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization of 2013

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Violence against women is a widespread and detrimental social problem, a serious violation of human rights both globally and domestically. Generally, it is estimated that 35 percent (one in three) of women worldwide have experienced some forms of intimate partner violence or non-partner physical and/or sexual violence (World Health Organization, 2013). According to the National Crime Victimization Survey from 2003 - 2013 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2013), domestic violence accounted for 21% of all violent victimization in the United States. Likewise, in another study, the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NIPSVS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010), Black et. al. concluded that in the United States, more than one in three women experienced multiple forms of rape, physical violence, stalking; about one in four women (24.3%) is at risk of severe physical domestic violence by an intimate partner, about one in five women are at risk of being sexually assaulted, one in six women are at risk of being stalked in their lifetime, and nearly one in ten women (9.4%) has been raped by an intimate partner in her lifetime.

Research has shown that domestic violence is a gender-based issue (Black et al., 2011). Although perpetrators of domestic violence can either be males or females, research statistics and have long showed that the majority of domestic violence victims are women, and the level of injuries for women is higher in comparison to men (Black et al., 2011). To date, women are still the primary victims of physical, sexual violence, and psychological abuse. Specifically, the prevalence of women suffering from severe physical violence by an intimate partner is critically higher (over 24%) when compared to men (13.8%) (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2013). Overall, the high rates of violence against women demonstrate that domestic violence is a gender-based problem that requires serious attention, research and interventions with a specific gender lens. As

such, it is imperative and significant to continue the efforts in reinforcing and strengthening policies, researches, and interventions to eliminate this domestic violence and its related forms.

Purpose of the study

Given the nature and ongoing prevalence of violence against women issue in the US, the purpose of this paper is to conduct a policy analysis of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2013. The primary focuses of this paper are on the evolution of the VAWA over the years (including its formation, history on the policy), the policy's values and special significance and characteristics; the effectiveness of the policy in addressing domestic violence problem; the policy's outcome with regards to its goals; and the additional provisions of the policy that led to the debate between the proponents and opponents during the reauthorization of the VAWA 2013.

Literature Review

Violence against women can be manifested in different ways ranging from domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking (Black et al., 2011). The literature review in this section provides a review on the significant historical and social movements that were the backbone influencing to the development of VAWA, as well as the discussion of the theoretical foundations of this landmark policy.

The Battered Women's Movement

During the 1960s 1970s of the 20th century, the American people witnessed a strong wave of Civil Rights movement, which included the anti-Vietnam War, the Black Liberation movement, the anti-rape movement, and the women's rights movement, to name a few (Pleck, 1987). All these social justice and social change movements have set the foundation for the advocacy of gender equality and women empowerment that grew later but steadily and strongly over this time.

Initially, as women participated in the battle against social injustice under the forms of collective political activities, the battered women's movement emerged and grew (Murray, 1988). This marked a significant milestone for women because prior to the 1970s, domestic violence issues commonly received little attention and recognition from the society as it was widely considered as "private" and "family matters" that did not necessary require interventions from law enforcement (Ashcraft, 2000; Murray, 1988).

The wave of social justice movement during the 1960s and 1970s had resulted in important response and commitment from the Federal level, which included the formation of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1961, the amendment of the Equal Right Act for equal wage and salary pay between genders, the passage of Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the formation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Although some goals of these efforts, such as prohibiting sex-based discrimination for wage and salary payment, have not been fulfilled, these movements have inspired women to actively participate in political activities, focusing on promoting gender equality and eliminating violence against women (Pleck, 1987).

In 1966, Betty Friedan, together with 27 other individuals, at the Third Conference of the Commission on the Status of Women, formed the National Organization for Women (NOW; Schechter, 1982). During the 1970s, the feminist movement continued to grow which led to the formation of The Battered Women's Movement. Under this movement, by 1973, the first shelters for abused women opened in St. Paul, Minneapolis (Pleck, 1989) and Phen. The growing publicity of domestic violence issues during this period led to the response from federal and related institution (Sewell, 1989). For example, in 1977, President Jimmy Carter set up the Office on Domestic Violence (ODV) in response to domestic violence issue nation-wide. However, the ODV

was closed in 1981 due to a lack of funding and support from the following president administration.

Theoretical Positions: Empowerment and Feminist

The prevalence of violence against women has long been ascribed to the long history of patriarchal authority from men over women (Pleck, 1987). In order to prevent and eliminate violence against women, it is crucial to first, challenge and change the social constructed patriarchy that has widely rooted in society. In this regards, theories such as empowerment and feminist have been attributed as the underlying strategy and backbone for VAWA.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the US society and policy makers were highly influenced by various Civil Rights movements and other social movements. These social movements, which significantly supported by conflict theory, social constructivism theory, and feminist theory, for example, had eventually influenced the legislation system in the US. For example, the heat from public reactions to the prevalence of violence against women in the 1970s had resulted in the Battered Women Movement that combats with domestic violence and sexual assault as both social problems and as crimes, which had not been acknowledged by the legislation system in the past (Hart, 1995). All these social movements and efforts made by anti-domestic violence advocates and activists had generated critical changes on the response of policy makers and criminal justice system toward domestic violence (Pleck, 1989), and eventually led to the official development of domestic violence legislation, which was successfully represented by VAWA.

The first theory is the empowerment theory that implies the process “by which individuals and groups gain power to access resources and to control the circumstances of their lives” (Adam, 2008). Empowerment theory speaks for the marginalized and oppressed population, and as such it is proper to support critical social policy reforms, including VAWA (Busch & Valentine, 2000).

Proponents of this theory argue that abused women are not victims by choice and that given sufficient resources, support, and access, women will choose lives free of violence for their children and themselves (Busch & Valentine, 2000). On another example, VAWA brings in provision that empower women to leave the abuser and testify against them to reinforce the non-tolerance notion toward violence against women.

The second is feminist theory, which explained that domestic violence happened as a result of patriarchy, gender inequality, and societal attitudes towards violence against women (Dwyer, Smokowski, Bricout & Wodarski, 1995; Yllo, 2005). Feminist stated that gender inequality had been existing in the US for long time because patriarchy has reinforced the notion of traditional gender roles, with men as dominant and have access to important resources, while women had been devalued as subordinate and inferior (Bograd, 1988). According to feminist theory, the key way to cope with domestic violence was to promote gender equality and break away from traditional gender roles. Facing with persuasive empirical and evidence of violence against women, policymakers adopted the ideas supported by feminist theory and developed VAWA with the notion that women were the primary target of domestic violence. One example is the recognition of VAWA that gender-based violence is a federal crime, which indirectly, raises women's position from inferior to equal.

Furthermore, feminist concept can be used as the underlying platform for VAWA on another perspective (Zosky, 2011). Under this theory, support services more focus on an egalitarian relationship between providers and victims. Thus, to tackle with domestic violence, it is equally important for the victims to actively look for help, and for the service providers to maintain availability and accessibility of services for victims (Zosky, 2011). In this regards, by adjusting budgets and grants to improve victim services, and by making services available to more

marginalized and oppressed population, VAWA 2013 provides women with means to make their own informed decisions, and empower them to escape an abusive relationship and start their new lives.

Method

Policy Analysis Models

This study used three policy analysis models developed by DiNitto (2007), Popple & Leighninger (2001), and Segal (2007) as guidance to analyze the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013. These models were chosen under consideration for the most appropriate and suitable guideline for the analyses of VAWA. Detailed content of the models are introduced under Appendix at the end of this paper. Specifically, to provide an overview context of VAWA and the nature of the violence against women problem, the first part of this paper will start with three sections “description and overview of the policy and problem”, “historical analysis”, and “social analysis” based on Popple and Leighninger’s (2001) model. The historical analysis and social analysis section introduced the social problems, the previous policies and programs, VAWA’s goal and value, how the VAWA evolved over time. The second part of this paper analyzed VAWA based on Segal’s (2007) model emphasized on: power imbalance or struggle, implementation of programs, actual impact, legislative intended impact, public expectations, and affected population. Finally, the last part of this paper followed DiNitto’s (2003) model suggestions on “Considerations related to program utility” to consider VAWA’s outcome in consideration of its goals, other things rather than the program itself that may cause the positive results of VAWA, as well as the cost-benefit of the Act.

- i. Part 1: the po

- ii. licy and social problem, analysis of policy and programs enacted. (Popple & Leighninger, 2001)
 - a. Nature of problem policy targets; relevant public policies
 - b. Description of policy: objectives, policy's evolution
- iii. Part 2: power imbalance or struggle with regards to policy values, perspectives and the target populations of the policy (Segal, 2007).
 - a. Values assessment: Who opposes it? Who supports it?
 - b. Target population: Who are the groups affected by this problem, and do they belong to a particular race, ethnicity, gender, class, age, ability, group of sexual orientation, or other special group?
- iv. Part 3: considerations related to program utility (DiNitto, 2003)
 - a. Evaluation of the policy outcomes
 - b. Impact of the policy: What was supposed to be the result? In what ways was the social problems supposed to be changed?

Sources of Data for Evaluation of VAWA

This paper analyzed the VAWA based on primary and secondary sources. Primary sources, such as the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, were collected from government websites and public library, governmental documents, U.S. Census Bureau, public records, government documents, and the Congressional hearings that discussed VAWA.

Secondary data were gathered from academic journal articles, news media sources, law review articles, and research that discussed VAWA.

Policy Analysis

The Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization of 2013 was signed into law on March, 7th, 2013 by President Obama. VAWA 2013 is built on the original VAWA of 1994's provision and its reauthorization and amendments in 2000 and 2005. The policy focuses on providing advocacy, improving services, and supporting all victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking. This analysis section will be presented under three parts based on the three models developed by Popple & Leighninger (2001), DiNitto (2003), and (Segal, 2007).

Part 1: The Social Problem Addressed and VAWA 2013

Nature of the Problem: Domestic Violence in the US

Domestic violence, defined as the act of threat or physical, sexual, psychological, and emotional violence within an intimate relationship, has long been a social and legal problem in all societies (Flury et al., 2010). The statistics presented at the beginning of this paper reaffirmed the widespread nature of domestic violence in the world and the United States. This problem was and continues to be regarded as a gender crime with women as the primary victims and men as the primary perpetrators (Hassouneh & Glass, 2008; Kelly & Johnson, 2008).

Although domestic violence is a longstanding problem in the society, not until the 1980s, 1990s that the issue was officially addressed in the US public policies (Schneider, 2008). In 1984, with the passage of the Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA), programs provided services for victims of family violence such as shelters, telephone hotlines, and counseling centers was funded by the federal for the first time (42 USC 10401). FVPSA was the main legislation designating funds for community agencies offering services for victims of family violence, as well

as allocating funds for training law enforcement and certain nonprofit organizations with the goals to intervene in violence within family setting (Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999).

Recognizing the scope and severity of intimate partner violence could go beyond the family setting, as well as under the strong influence of the social and Civil rights movements in the 1970s, a decade after the formation of FVPSA, Congress passed the first Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994, which was signed by President Clinton as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (Schneider, 1996).

Since the establishment of the Act in 1994, positive outcomes in regard of the prevalence of domestic violence has been reported and attributed to the successful enforcement and implementation of VAWA. According to the Bureau of Justice (2011), it is reported that between 1994 and 2011, the rates of intimate partner violence for both men and women has decreased for 67%. However, the attribution of VAWA's impact on domestic violence was challenged by the fact that the overall crimes rates in the US also reduced with equivalent degree (Bureau of Justice, 2011). And as statistics in the introduction of this paper show in the beginning, the current prevalence of violence against women, including serious crimes such as rape, sexual assault, and homicide, is still significant. For example, the rate of homicides committed by women's spouses or partners has increased from 29.7% in the 1994 to 39.3% in 2010 (Catalano, 2013). Evidence like this proposes that, regardless of the promising changes in certain aspects, violence against women is still an ongoing and crucial problem that requires continued initiatives, efforts, research and interventions from everyone in the society, particularly from researchers, law enforcement

officials, legislation personnel, and policy makers to continue working on improving public policies, such as VAWA, to combat with this human right violation and gender inequality issue.

Description of the Policy

On September 13th, 1994, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was passed as part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Modi, Palmer, & Armstrong, 2014). Although it was not the first federal law to address family violence in the United States, since the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act had previously been developed and approved in 1984, VAWA was undeniably the first comprehensive legislative endeavor to develop national response to the widespread violence against women and is the first federal law approved that formally addresses domestic violence as crimes (Runge, 2013). As a matter of fact, VAWA legislation needs to be reauthorized and modified every five years. During the first and second reauthorization process in 2000 and 2005, the consideration and discussion on the changes for VAWA went smoothly without significant challenges. However, during the reauthorization of the bill in 2011, VAWA was halted until 2013 because it lacked bipartisan support (Modi et al., 2014). Not until March 7th, 2013, was the new VAWA bill signed into law by President Obama, with historical amendments that include more victims of domestic violence, sexual assaults, dating violence, and stalking.

Objectives:

When passes as a succession of the preceding bill, the VAWA 2013 continues to endorse the goals of the 1994 Act, which committed to prevent violence against women, to address the needs of, and to provide protection and services for victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Particularly, one of the objective of the Act is “to control and prevent crime” (VAWA, 1994), by which VAWA commit to support “states, Indian tribal governments, and unites of local

government to develop and strengthen effective law enforcement and prosecution strategies to combat violent crimes against women, and to develop and strengthen victim services in cases involving violent crimes against women (VAWA, 1994).

Under VAWA 2013, Congress distributed \$3.33 billion dollars for five years from 2013 to 2018 to reauthorize current programs and to develop appropriate new ones, such as those aimed at reinforcing the criminal justice response to immigrant, women on colleges, Native Americans, LGBT victims of intimate partner violence. Overall, the Act was organized into eleven titles, and was primarily strengthened based on the previous provisions of the VAWA **2005**. A full list of the coverage of the 11 titles is provided in the Appendix.

History of VAWA

The passage of VAWA 1994 was a breakthrough in the legislation history in the regard that it had significantly changed the perception and the scope of intimate partner violence from a “family and personal problem” to a “human rights” and a serious social issue (Russel, 2003). Under VAWA 1994, domestic violence and sexual assault were charged as crimes (Sack, 2009; Schneider, 1996). With such intensified criminal acknowledgment from the legal system toward intimate partner violence, public opinion has also improved critically and more punitively (Johnson & Sigler, 2000).

Historically, the formation of VAWA was originated from the social and women’s movement that brought up the issue of domestic violence in the 1970s. During this time, critics has pointed out that victims of domestic violence were primarily portrayed as a single type with characteristics and policies that mainly apply for White heterosexual women (Crenshaw, 1991; Salter, 2014). As such, concerns on the limitation and insufficiency in reflecting the accurate nature and situation of domestic violence and victims experiences in the US was raised (Crenshaw, 1991;

Matlow & DePrince, 2012; Nurius & Macy, 2008; Salter, 2014). Taken this into consideration, the VAWA 1994 had paid careful attention on the issues of battered immigrant women because of the fact that many illegal immigrants were tied into violent relationships with the abusers. Strict immigration laws in the US, combined with the fear of deportation if they leave their abusive partners, and the fear of poverty are some main reasons that prevented immigrant women to seek help and save their lives (Kim, 2013; Lee, 2007). Since the first ratification of the bill in 1994, VAWA had evolved and magnified over the years to protect broader and more diverse populations and to address particular needs and experiences of domestic violence victims.

Evaluation of VAWA's role and significance

VAWA appears as a key approach in combating domestic violence, a phenomenon that posed significant consequences to individuals, family, and the society (Swaminatha, 2004). Above all, the policy's primary goals are to improve the response and operation of the criminal justice system, and to foster the collective responses to violence against women issue (Thomas, 2004). The first goal has been realized through the federal protection offered to all victims of intimate partner violence, through the efforts to safeguard and ensure security for battered victims and their children, and through the strengthening of penalties on perpetrators. VAWA honors values of social justice by alleviating barriers on battered immigrant women, such as creating legal relief for battered immigrant women, and by improving provisions that considers victims of domestic violence equally, regardless of their gender, race, ability, background, citizenship status, to name a few.

Second, another important mission of VAWA is to establish and promote a coordinated community response in tackling with domestic violence issue (CCR). This coordination encouraged the related stakeholders to connect with each other and foster collaboration to make

sure that coordinated response and services were not only available for victims, but also for the offenders as a whole (Swaminatha, 2004; Thomas, 2004). Also, besides criminalizing perpetrators, VAWA has increased the availability of services to more battered victims through creating a national domestic violence hotline and increasing funds for shelters and services for domestic violence victims. (Schornstein, 1997).

The Reauthorization of VAWA in 2013 added several significant amendments on the bill, some of these includes: provisions for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people to access VAWA protection without discrimination, provisions for the authority of Tribal law enforcement to protect the Native Americans against non-tribal people who commit domestic or dating violence, provisions targeting victims of human trafficking, and provisions ensuring that child victims of sex trafficking are eligible for grant assistance (Modi et al., 2014). All these changes demonstrate an increasing inclusive and diverse approach of VAWA with the goal to protect all victims of domestic violence, particularly those belong to the “underserved population”.

Part 2: Policy’s Values Assessment and Target Populations

Values Assessment of the VAWA 2013

Values of a policy reflect important ideals, beliefs, and values of the nation’s leaders, policy makers, and to certain levels, the society as a whole (Jimenez et al., 2015). Conflicting values among the proponents and opponents of the Reauthorization of VAWA 2013 is the primary reason for all the debates (Busch-Armendariz, 2013). The fact that the Reauthorization of VAWA 2013 was the first to be rejected (in 2011, an election year), after almost 20 years since the passage of the law, indicates the wide variety and diversified values held within Congress, the public in the

United States, as well as the political motives within the House and the Senate (DeForest, 2013; Ortega & Busch-Armendariz, 2013).

First of all, the VAWA 2013, just like the previous bills, fundamentally holds values that speak for the opposition of violence as crimes against women. To fulfill and demonstrate this value, VAWA strived for promoting the training and education for law enforcement force and judiciary officials to prepare them to not only listen, identify and support victims of domestic violence but to also make abusers responsible for their offend. By reauthorizing VAWA in 2013 with continued focus on training and pro-arrest programs, policymakers aimed at tackling violence against women issue by dedicating a significant amount of funding to the education and training of law enforcement and judiciary personnel (Abolfazli, 2006). Furthermore, with new initiatives and provisions, VAWA 2013 resolves previous legislation issues, such as the expansion of the protections for immigrants victims abused by an US intimate partners or a family member. Reinforcing law enforcement and legislation reaction to violence against women is a significant way toward changing the societal attitudes on domestic violence and related issue on women.

The second overarching value of VAWA 2013 is the continued efforts build on previous versions of VAWA to protect the underrepresented populations, such as battered immigrant women, Native American women, the LGBT community, and women in college. The new and additional provisions of sections in VAWA 2013 aimed at assisting women and other underserved populations, regardless of their genders, age, backgrounds, citizenship status, to be able to seek help and free themselves from the abusive relationships (Bridges, 2008). On the whole, continuing the traditions of the previous bill, VAWA 2013 valued the protection of all people and looked into

improving programs and services for the advancement of acknowledgment, protection and prosecution of violent crimes against women (Cho & Wilke, 2005).

Those advocates for the changes in VAWA 2013 emphasize the importance for public policies to meet the needs and address problems of all individuals, groups, and communities in the society, especially the underserved communities. These advocates oppose discrimination, and in fact support values of humanity, equity, inclusiveness for all people living in the United States, even for those who are illegal immigrants but suffer from domestic violence or its related forms (Jimenez et al., 2015). On the other hand, those who oppose the modification of VAWA 2013 have demonstrated particular prominent arguments against each changes in the new VAWA. The following section will dedicate to discuss these issues.

Target Populations

VAWA was passed to provide protection and address the needs of all victims of domestic violence. Although no one in society is excluded from help, empirical studies have identified that women are the primary victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. In fact, statistics result has shown that violence caused by male partners is the number one cause of injury to women in the US (Portwood & Heany, 2007). Over the years, VAWA has expanded the definition of violence against women, and expanded the policy's target populations after every Reauthorizations (Jimenez et al., 2015), which made it more inclusive of all victims of the crimes against women. For example, under VAWA, it has been recognized that children and youth are direct or indirect victims of domestic violence and, thus, are in need of programs to protect them from the effect of domestic violence and abuse. This indicates the importance of VAWA and its funding and grants for the programs and services for victims of domestic violence as well as related people who are also affected by the violence at home (Buzawa & Buzawa, 2003; Thomas, 2004).

Another example is the amendment of sections to include older victims of domestic violence in the target population in the VAWA Reauthorization of 2000. Since then, VAWA has paid more attention on the underserved population in the society. This section, therefore, will discuss the particular addition on the target populations that VAWA 2013 addresses, with focus on immigrants, LGBT community, Native American populations, and women on college campus.

Immigrant population. Often in most cases, the immigrant women who suffer from domestic violence usually have particular and different needs due to issues such as language and culture, lack of access to resources, racist and nativist attitudes (Arcidiacono, 2010; Crenshaw, 1991;). Immigrant population had been first taken into consideration under the original VAWA of 1994 and has since been improved after the Reauthorization of the law in 2000 and 2005 (Orloff et al., 2010). Positive changes have been made to meet the specific needs of victims of domestic violence who are immigrants. For example, in the past, the US immigration system's requirement was that the sponsoring representatives must proceed the application process for the immigrants they sponsored. Unfortunately, in some cases, these sponsors and intimate partners are offenders of domestic violence and therefore, hold hostage of their partner's status by not applying to achieve legal status for their spouses. As such, the "U" visa were introduced to offer self-petition process for immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking to obtain a special legal status to stay in the US (Gill, 2013). In order to be able to apply for "U" visa, the immigrant victims are required to cooperate and to provide sufficient information about the crime to the law enforcement representatives (Gill, 2013).

The advocacy for this type of special visa for immigrant victims, in fact, had been challenged with the opposition of those who are critical on extending availability of legal status for immigrants in the US. For example, some members of the government voted against the

increasing grants to “U” visa for immigrant victims of domestic violence and argued that this would be the foundation for further changes in immigration policies in future (Ortega & Busch-Armendariz, 2013). On the other hand, the proponents of this provision argued that under this change in VAWA 2013, although the increased access for “U” visa would increase the application and implementation process, it would at the same time raise awareness and protections for immigrants who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assaults (Ortega & Busch-Armendariz, 2013). VAWA 2013 also expanded its protections to men, allowing men to also apply for “U” visas if the requirements apply to them (42 U.S.S. §§ 13701). This is the first time in history of VAWA that a new gender category was introduced, marking it a significant change in the law which has long been purely targeting women as victims of domestic violence and sexual assaults.

The Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT). The LGBT community has often been excluded in research on intimate partner violence and sexual assaults (Hassouneh & Glass, 2008). As a result, the precise statistics of intimate partner violence for this community are not available and accessible to use (Hassouneh & Glass, 2008; Messinger, 2011). In the past few years, more studies have been done to examine domestic violence problem among LGBT community. Findings have shown that LGBT individuals also suffer from domestic violence and sexual assault (Balsam & Szymanski, 2005; Hassouneh & Glass, 2008; Messinger, 2011), and some studies revealed that the prevalent of the problem for this community is at least as much as it is for the (heterosexual) mainstream population (Walters et al., 2013). However, despite the growing evidence, there has been a significant lack of services specifically provided for the LGBT victims of domestic violence (Ahmed, Jindasurat, & Wasser, 2014; Messinger, 2011). Realizing the problem, the Reauthorization of VAWA in 2013 has particularly addressed issues related to

violence to LGBT community. By stating that VAWA includes all individuals regardless of “gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation, with no domestic violence programs and services being allowed to discriminate” (42 U.S.C. §§ 13701), VAWA 2013 had made equal protections to the LGBT community, and men as well. This recognition of LGBT and men experiences of domestic violence is undeniably a landmark of VAWA since men were not previously in the target populations for VAWA’s protections and services.

Native American tribes. Native Americans have the highest rates of domestic violence and sexual assaults in the US (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2006; Ortega & Busch-Armendariz, 2013). Despite the empirical evidence, and the fact that the problems with Native Americans had been recognized since the Reauthorization of VAWA 2000, it was not until the latest Reauthorization of VAWA in 2013 that the issues were addressed. Under the new VAWA 2013, specific protections and services for Native Americans were introduced, including the ability of the tribes to prosecute non-tribal members for domestic violence and sexual assaults crimes made against a tribal member on tribal land (42 U.S.C. §§ 13701).

Women on college campuses. Another targeted population is the women on college campuses. Although being a new target group of VAWA, women on college campuses are identified as particularly in need of attention and services (Marshall, 2014). The Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (or SaVE Act) was, thus, developed to particularly address the issue. The purpose of this Act is to make national standards for colleges in regard of dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and intimate partner violence. Some prominent contents of this bill are: the requirements among all colleges on dealing with sexual assault allegations, the requirements for colleges to publicly inform their process when handling sexual assault and to educate students with their rights in these cases, and the requirement to reinforce education and prevention on

violent crime against women to raise the awareness around the issues so that the students can self-protect and self-advocate once there are incidents occur (Marshall, 2014).

In fact, the SaVE Act was introduced since VAWA 2000, but was rejected two times (Marshall, 2014). The opponents of the SaVE Act had argued that the accused abuser would not have equal rights to protections and services as the victims (Marshall, 2014). The other opponent was that colleges are reluctant to publicly display their crimes rates of dating violence and sexual assault due to their concern that the numbers would affect the reputations and images of the colleges, and as a result, would hurt the admission and recruitment of the schools (Marshall, 2014).

Part 3: Considerations related to Program Utility

The alteration and modification in the distribution of resources, rights, services, and statuses could explain for the objections and debate on the Reauthorization of VAWA 2013 between the Democratic and Republican parties (Dreveskaracht, 2012; Zosky, 2011). One argument from the Republican view was that the Reauthorization of VAWA would give unbalanced priority to some populations, which would lead to further problematic consequences (Zosky, 2011). On the other hand, the Democrats argued that new services and programs provided for the newly added underserved marginalized populations in the policy only allows these previously ignored populations the same rights and statuses as other populations that had been included in the VAWA.

Distribution of Resources:

The broader and more inclusive provisions of VAWA 2013 represents “a closing in the gap of justice” (Singh, 2014, p.1). With its modification, the Reauthorization of VAWA 2013 brought along the changes and modification in distribution of resources. With an expansion on target populations, there is more funding available for organizations providing services and

addressing the needs of marginalized populations, which, as a result, affecting the distribution of resources, or grants under VAWA 2013. Although the total budget for VAWA 2013 was reduced 17% compared to the preceding bill, from 3.935 billion for the 2006-2011 period, to 3.33 billion for the 2013-2018 period, the funding has been adjusted to appropriately address the needs of domestic violence victims, meaning some grants was reduced, some were combined, and some other were increased. For example, funding for the Tribal Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalitions Grant Program has been significantly increased, from around \$3.9 million dollars in 2011, 2012 and \$3.14 million dollars in 2013, to \$6.22 million dollars in 2014 and \$6.28 million dollars in 2015 (Sacco, 2013). A second example is the new Grants for outreach to underserved populations which was not available before 2013 but was made available at around \$4.9 million for each year in 2014 and 2015. Another example is the new Collaborative Grants to Increase the Long term stability of Victims (focus on Youth) which was budgeted for \$4 million dollars each year in 2014 and 2015. These grants shifts the focus more on special underserved groups, and as such, puts more focus on program and services, rather than on criminalizing the abusive partner.

Power Imbalance or Struggle:

The VAWA 2013 carries an ambitious goal with regard to the effort to close the gaps in service providing and to address the needs of previously overlooked and underserved communities. The Reauthorization of VAWA 2013 was a phenomenon and meaningful success because it took a long way to overcome strong objections and ultimately achieved the passage of the new momentous provisions. Similar to the Reauthorization of VAWA of 2000 and 2005, this latest Reauthorization of VAWA in 2013 reaffirms the recognition of the need for special provisions for marginalized and usually unnoticed populations. The updated provisions such as the inclusion of LGBTQ individuals, which also include men, as victims of domestic violence; and the redefinition

of tribal sovereignty to address crimes committed by non-Native American abusers, are important steps towards the overarching goals of social justice and gender equality.

The delay on Reauthorization of VAWA for over a year (from 2011 to 2013) uncovers the highly conflicting and divided political context within the House and the Senate. The intense criticism and opposition from Republican representatives to numerous provisions of VAWA as mentioned in Part 2 explain for the existing stereotype and discrimination against underserved population such as Native American women, immigrants, and LGBTQ community.

It is also plausible to consider that the Reauthorization of VAWA in 2013 was enacted largely under the pressure of the election that was happening at the same time. As several Democrat politicians stated during the Congressional hearings, voting against this all-inclusive Act that aimed at preventing domestic violence and sexual assaults would be stepping backward from the evolution of human history (DeForest, 2013).

Conclusion

The role of VAWA in changing the status quo and influencing the law enforcement and the legislative system's perception and response to violence against women is historical and truly profound. Although there is still more room to improve, to date, VAWA's provisions have reflected the importance of a national response and a federal commitment to combat with the social problems on victims of domestic violence. As a succession of the previous Reauthorizations, VAWA 2013 continues to make its landmark in addressing violence against women issues. The changes in VAWA 2013, such as including victims regardless of gender, sexual orientations, background, citizenship status, have been one of the boldest moves since the formulation of the law. With the latest authorization in 2013, once again, VAWA represents the

commitment to combat the evil and to protect the vulnerable individuals and communities. More importantly, the enforcement, implementation of VAWA has not only reflected the goals and values of VAWA, as to protect victims of all walks of life, but also has truly mirrored the American values in treasuring every single human being and enhancing humanism, all of which has been part of the core values of the country.

Reference:

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