

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:** Ann Rose Greenberg

800.343.2823

**Interfaith Coalition Advocates for the International Violence against Women Act**

On May 11<sup>th</sup> the Interfaith Domestic Violence Coalition hosted an Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill to urge swift passage of the International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA), HR. 4594/ S. 2982. Considering the statistics on gender-based violence, this legislation could save the lives of untold numbers of at-risk women and girls: Approximately one in three women worldwide has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused. In some countries the rate is as high as 70 percent.

The IVAWA, reintroduced in both the Senate and the House of Representatives with bipartisan support on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010, is the first comprehensive legislation in the aimed at ending violence against women and girls around the world. First introduced in 2007 by now Vice-President Biden, it is a bold and transformative bill that would make ending violence against girls and women a foreign policy priority, and improve our own security by investing in women's organizations and actions that reduce violence and extremism.

"In the last 50 years, more women have been killed because of their gender than all men engaged in armed conflict," Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) stated at the February 4<sup>th</sup> reintroduction press event for the IVAWA, quoting Nicholas Kristof & Cheryl WuDunn's Pulitzer Prize winning book *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*.

The Coalition met with congressional offices including Foreign Affairs Chairman Howard Berman (CA), Ranking Member Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL), and Representatives Mary Bono Mack (CA), Virginia Brown-Waite (FL), Jo Ann Emerson (MO), Sue Myrick (NC), Mary Fallin (OK), Marsha Blackburn (TN) and Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA) urging them to join the list of 90 cosponsors and pressing Chairman Berman to schedule a full committee mark-up.

*The Interfaith Domestic Violence Coalition, convened by Jewish Women International in 2007, comprises over 20 faith organizations, representing millions of congregants spanning the Jewish, Muslim, Baha'i, United Methodist, Catholic, Evangelical, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, Mennonite, Seventh-Day Adventist and Unitarian Universalist communities across the US. The Coalition shares a commitment to effect positive change and to advocate, with a collective voice, for national legislation and policies that protect all people from domestic violence, with particular concern for women and children.*

*Jewish Women International (JWI) is the leading Jewish organization empowering women and girls through economic literacy, community training, healthy relationships education, and the proliferation of women's leadership. Our innovative programs, advocacy and philanthropic initiatives protect the fundamental rights of all girls and women to live in safe homes, thrive in healthy relationships, and realize the full potential of their personal strength. For more information, please visit [www.jwi.org](http://www.jwi.org) or call 800.343.2823.*

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