

## Rep Honda Introduces the Domestic Violence Judicial Support Act

Written by Mike Honda

Wednesday, 23 January 2013 00:00

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WASHINGTON DC - Today, US Rep Michael Honda (CA-17) introduced the Domestic Violence Judicial Support Act of 2013 to train judges and prosecutors, who overwhelmingly support the bill, to better understand the dynamics of domestic violence and child custody cases. The following statement by Congressman Honda, and multiple statements by national judges, accompanied the introduction of the legislation.

"I'm introducing the Domestic Violence Judicial Support Act of 2013 to highlight, and build support for, the indispensable judicial programs that comprise the backbone of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)," **said US Representative Michael Honda**. "For over a year, the larger VAWA reauthorization has been held hostage by the extreme right and, as a result, women everywhere have suffered. The critical and specialized training and resources provided under this bill help train judges to understand the dynamics of domestic violence and child custody cases. Additionally, this bill will help ensure that these programs are funded in any final compromise agreement. Representing the Bay Area, I have seen first-hand how well trained prosecutors and judges, like those in the East and South Bay, can forge efficiencies in the judicial system to better support women and families going through difficult situations. In California, these types of programs are doubly important as studies have shown that 40% of women in the state experience physical intimate partner violence at some point in their lives. It is essential that we do not delay passage of these programs, lives depend on it."

**Background:** One-third of violent felons in state criminal courts are charged with domestic violence; 50 percent of these offenders have killed their victims. Many of these murders occur during the time when couples are waiting to go to trial, highlighting the critical need for efficiency in court proceedings. Similarly, providing special domestic violence courts and court-appointed advocates can save foster children nearly 7 and a half months in the court system; that means they will experience fewer out of home placements and have significantly improved educational performance. The programs reauthorized in the Domestic Violence Judicial Support Act do just this, allowing courts to specialize, thereby making them more efficient, consistent and able to incorporate a stronger focus on rehabilitation of offenders and deterrence of repeat offenses. These programs are not only the right thing to do, they also save states money.

"Judges have been given a grave responsibility by Congress to oversee family violence, foster care, and child welfare matters to ensure the protection of our country's most vulnerable children and families. With each new legislative iteration, Congress increases the oversight responsibility of the courts in these areas. Specialized training for juvenile and family court judges is critically important to ensure that these court systems are effectively implementing federal statutes and state legislation and serving victims of abuse, their children, and their families. That is why we support Rep. Honda's Domestic Violence Judicial Support Act of 2013 which supports family and juvenile court judges having access to high-quality training to better serve families and victims in the justice system affected by domestic violence." - **Judge**

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### **Michael Nash, President, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges**

“Those of us who work and volunteer with children in the foster care system know only too well how domestic violence and sexual abuse can shatter a family and destroy the foundations of a child’s life. Child who are exposed to domestic violence are in danger, and are more likely to be abused themselves. In 2011 alone, an estimated 681,000 children were victimized by abuse, and 1,570 children died as a result of maltreatment. Children who witness abuse or are victims themselves often grow up with lifelong emotional and behavioral problems, aggression, hostility, disobedience and depression. Failure to provide for the safety and protection of our children and their mothers today will send government expenses soaring in the future. What needs to be soaring are the hopes and aspirations of America’s children. We are grateful for the leadership of Rep. Honda, and other members of Congress who join his effort to keep our children and their mothers safe – at home, in school, and in their communities.” - **Michael Piraino, CEO, National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association**

“Judges have a unique responsibility in our nation’s communities. Courts are at the forefront of state and local work to keep families and communities safe. I have served on the bench for 12 years and believe it is critical to focus on essential judicial court-related services that train prosecutors and judges how to handle sensitive domestic violence cases; provide advocates for children trapped in the cycle of violence; and forge efficiencies in the system that allow for timely, consistent rulings. This is why I support Congressman Honda’s Domestic Violence Judicial Support Act of 2013 which highlights and builds support for these indispensable judicial training programs, ensuring that they are funded in the final Violence Against Women Act authorization.” - **Judge Katherine Lucero, Superior Court Judge, Family and Juvenile Dependency Court, Santa Clara County**

“All of us would like to think that we know what decisions are correct in every situation. Well, it is not humanly possible to make the right decision each and every time, but I will tell you that with effective training, supported by Rep. Honda's Domestic Violence Judicial Support Act of 2013, more children, elders and families will receive the appropriate protection only judicial officers knowledgeable about the many ways family violence impacts our families and the safety of our communities can provide.” - **Judge Katherine Tennyson, Circuit Court Judge, Multnomah County, Oregon and Board Trustee of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges**

"As Chief Administrative Judge for Vermont’s Trial Courts and a trustee of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) I have seen first-hand the extraordinary benefits my state has reaped from the Model Courts program. We have implemented many of the best practices that have been developed in the model courts and all of our new judges are trained by lead judges from the program so that new judges on the bench can learn from their more experienced peers.” - **Judge Amy Davenport, Chief Administrative Judge for the Trial Courts, Vermont**

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