



**Remarks by Chai Jindasurat
New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project**

**At a City Hall Press Conference on March 14, 2012
Regarding Resolution 1064 Calling Upon the United States Congress to reauthorize the
Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**

Good morning. I am Chai Jindasurat, the Coordinator of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) at the New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP). Thank you to the City Council on Women's Issues for their leadership in urging Congress to pass the Violence Against Women Act.

AVP empowers lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and HIV-affected communities and allies to end all forms of violence through organizing and education, and support survivors through counseling and advocacy. AVP coordinates NCAVP, a national coalition of local member programs and affiliate organizations that works to prevent, respond to, and end all forms of violence against and within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and HIV-affected (LGBTQH) communities.

AVP's Executive Director, Sharon Stapel, and NCAVP members have worked extensively on the Violence Against Women Act, specifically to make the re-authorization of VAWA LGBTQ-inclusive to protect all survivors of violence. Recognizing this need, Senators Leahy (D-Vermont) and Crapo (R-Idaho), introduced S. 1925, a bill to re-authorize VAWA that explicitly includes LGBTQ survivors and victims in VAWA protections.

AVP knows that domestic and sexual violence occurs as frequently in LGBTQ communities as in any community - in 25-33% of relationships. Yet LGBTQ survivors have far fewer resources for support and safety. NCAVP's membership works directly with LGBTQ survivors on a daily basis across the nation. NCAVP also compiles and documents this violence in an annually published report about intimate partner violence in LGBTQ communities in the United States.

In 2010, NCAVP's national report found that 45% of LGBTQ survivors were turned away from domestic violence shelter and only 7% of all LGBTQ survivors called the police after an incident of domestic violence. Additionally, nearly 55% of LGBTQ survivors seeking an order of protection in the United States were denied. In another 2010 study, 96% of victim services and law enforcement agencies in the United States said that they did not have specific services for LGBTQ victims. A 2011 survey of NCAVP coalition members and affiliates found that nearly 85% of survey participants responded that they had worked with an LGBTQ client/survivor of domestic and intimate partner violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking who reported that they were turned away or denied services (such as shelter, crisis intervention, police or legal response) because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

To give you an idea of what this looks like for LGBTQ survivors, I'd like to tell you the true story of Davis. Davis, a gay man, was in danger because his ex-boyfriend Jason, the abuser he had fled, had just found him. Davis had just received a death threat in the form of a note on his car from Jason. Davis had been with Jason for seven years. During that time his partner was always controlling, he monitored his phone calls, wanted to know where he was at all times and controlled all of their money. One day when Davis came home from work, Jason was already home with his friends. Jason and Davis got into a fight and

Jason sexually assaulted Davis. A few days later Davis grabbed a few things, got in his car and just started driving. Davis stayed with a friend that Jason didn't know, and got a job. He was away from Jason for a month before he got the note on his car, which threatened Davis' life. Davis sought help with domestic violence shelters but was told "we don't shelter men." Davis faced a world in which services for LGBTQ people were scarce, few service providers understood his needs as a gay man, and where he had to cross the country to find an LGBTQ-specific service provider to help him. No victim or survivor of violence should have to face this world, especially not while they are also dealing with intimate partner or sexual violence.

S. 1925 now has 59 co-sponsors. We need only 1 more to ensure that survivors of domestic and sexual violence receive the critical support they need through VAWA. Once passed in the Senate, we hope to see a comparably LGBTQ-inclusive bill in the House of Representatives.

AVP applauds the City Council for supporting S. 1925, a bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, which, for the first time, explicitly protects LGBTQ survivors. This bill will help all survivors of domestic and sexual violence get the support they need. We call on everyone to call their Congress members and tell them how critical S. 1925 for the safety of survivors of domestic and sexual violence, and to urge them to support its passage to ensure that life-saving resources are available to all survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and stalking.