



Asian Women's Self Help Association (ASHA)

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Rati Bishnoi
202-431-2740
Rati.Bishnoi@gmail.com

For immediate release

Feb. 18, 2008

ASHA FOR WOMEN PARTICIPATES IN CAPITOL HILL INTERFAITH DIALOGUE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

WASHINGTON—Asian Women's Self Help Association (ASHA) last week joined more than 20 community and faith-based organizations under the Interfaith Domestic Violence Coalition to spotlight the role of such groups in shaping national policy on domestic violence issue. The coalition, which was formed last summer, hosted its inaugural briefing—"Policy and Persuasion: How Faith-based Communities Can Work Together to Advance Domestic Violence Laws"—on Feb. 13.

Calling President Bush's fiscal year 2009 budget "especially punishing" to domestic violence programs, Sen. Klobuchar (D-MN) urged the coalition members to inform policy makers about the challenges facing domestic violence victims. "The faith community has a powerful moral voice on behalf of victims, survivors, and their families at the policy level." Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX)—another longtime advocate for domestic violence issues and the only member of Congress with a victim's rights coordinator on his staff—asked for the coalition's support in strengthening the Victims of Crime Act, which provides funds for the immediate assistance of crime victims.

Besides seeking to cut funding for services under the Violence against Women Act, the FY-09 budget also proposes eliminating \$2 billion from the Victims of Crime Act. If approved, these cuts would further burden domestic violence programs, which serve more than 53,000 adults and children in the nation daily. Even at current levels, nearly 8,000 additional requests go unmet because of the lack of funding and staff, according to a report published last month by the National Network to End Domestic Violence.

Domestic violence remains a significant issue within the South Asian American community. A 2002 study of 160 participants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan found that 40.8% of respondents had been physically and sexually abused in some way by their current male partners.

For nearly 20 years, ASHA for Women—which means "hope" in several South Asian languages—has been dedicated to ending all forms of violence against women. The Washington-based nonprofit is committed to providing culturally specific, multi-lingual support and referral services to South Asian women in need. For more on the organization, please visit <http://www.ashaforwomen.org/ashainc.html>.

Interfaith Domestic Violence Coalition

The Interfaith Domestic Violence Coalition, convened by Jewish Women International, includes representatives from national faith organizations like the Islamic Social Services Association, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, and the United Methodist Church. To learn more, please visit <http://www.jwi.org/site/c.okLWJ3MPKtH/b.3515925/>.