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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SENATE PASSES VITAL LEGISLATION FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS**

*Senator Harkin praised for his leadership*

(December 6, 2010) – The Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) and victim advocates in Iowa and across the country applaud Senator Harkin for his leadership in passing a bill to reauthorize the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA), as part of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). Swift passage of the final bill will help keep domestic violence shelters open so that victims and their children can find safety and support to flee abusive homes.

“We greatly appreciate all the work of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee on passing FVPSA, and especially thank Senator Harkin for his unwavering commitment to domestic violence victims,” said Laurie Schipper, Executive Director of ICADV. “ICADV applauds Senator Harkin’s remarkable leadership as Chair of the HELP Committee and for his significant passing the bill. He is truly a champion for victims and the residents of Iowa are proud of his work.”

FVPSA is the only dedicated federal funding source for domestic violence shelters and services. For 25 years, FVPSA-funded programs have been supporting the lifesaving emergency shelters, crisis lines, counseling, victim assistance and programs for underserved communities provided by local domestic violence programs, but it expired in 2008. The new bill will build upon FVPSA’s core strengths and includes critical improvements that will allow more victims to receive the services they so desperately need. FVPSA will continue to support the crucial work of domestic violence shelters and programs in Iowa and across the country.

There are over twenty seven community-based domestic violence programs providing emergency shelter to approximately 456 victims and their children every year in Iowa. FVPSA reauthorization and funding is critical in Iowa especially in these difficult economic times. In 2009, 102 victim requests for services went unmet. This is due to the lack of funds to pay for staff, emergency housing, and services to assist these victims. Without FVPSA reauthorization many more women and children who are victims of domestic violence will be left without options.

“Victim advocates in Iowa and across the country are anxious to see the bill’s swift passage in the House and signed into law by the President,” said Schipper. “Domestic violence victims are counting on Congress to support lifesaving services.”