



Kansas Senate Judiciary Committee

In support of SB 378

Submitted by Jennifer Parson, State Coordinator Kansas NOW

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Kansas National Organization for Women (NOW) is a statewide organization whose primary mission is to advocate for women in Kansas. Domestic violence and sexual assault are issues which disproportionately affect women, and Kansas NOW stands firmly in support of this legislation to prevent workplace discrimination against victims.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), 1 in 3 women have been victims of some sort of physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime, 1 in 5 women have been raped in their lifetime, and 1 in 7 women have been stalked by an intimate partner. NCADV estimates that as many as 60% of victims of intimate partner violence lose their jobs for reasons related to the abuse.ⁱ

Job security is vitally important to victims, particularly those who are attempting to gain independence from their abusers. Without income from employment, victims and their children rely more heavily on already-strained public assistance and social service resources. Those unable to provide for themselves and their families are often forced to return to their abusers. This not only increases risk to victims but also use of law enforcement, emergency medical, and family therapy services. Communities are safer and healthier when we work together to help survivors of intimate partner violence gain and maintain independence.

Physical and psychological effects of intimate partner violence can persist for years and often result in loss of productivity and missed time at work for victims. However, blame lies solely on abusers, and victims must be protected from workplace discrimination as a result of their experience. This legislation would give victims one more tool to break the cycle of violence.

On these grounds Kansas NOW strongly urges you to vote in favor of SB 378.

ⁱ "Statistics." *Statistics*. National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, n.d. Web. 09 Feb. 2016.