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## FEW Washington Legislative Update September 1-15, 2024

### Congress Returns September 9, 2024

#### IN CONGRESS:

Both the House and Senate have [returned](#) from their August recess and are in a sprint through September before they are expected to [adjourn](#) at the end of the month to go home to campaign. Top of mind is getting the government funded, prior to the September 30 funding deadline, which as expected, is not off to a stellar start.

On September 11, 2024, House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-Louisiana) [canceled a planned vote](#) on a stopgap funding bill that could keep the government open for the next six months after more than a dozen of Republicans walked back their support for it. Chances of passage sank in recent days amid opposition from defense hawks, hardline conservatives and even moderates. The decision to pull the vote on the [CR and Safeguard American Voter Eligibility \(SAVE\) Act](#) bill marks a complete turn for Speaker Johnson, who just 24 hours earlier promised to not only bring the legislation to the floor but pass it despite the mounting opposition.

The government is set to partially shut down at 12:01 A.M. on October 1 if a funding deal is not passed by Congress. This is slightly more than a month before the [November elections](#), which will determine which political party controls both chambers of Congress and the next president.

**FEW Washington Legislative Update – September 1-15, 2024  
Tier I**

Federal Women:

**Legislation: New Co-sponsors**

**Comprehensive Paid Leave for Federal Employees Act ([H.R. 856/S. 274](#))**

54 co-sponsors in the House, 12 co-sponsors in the Senate

*Converts unpaid caregiving & medical FMLA leave to paid leave for federal employees  
(parental is currently paid)*

**FEW in Action**

**FEW's Advocacy Day – September 17-19, 2024**

Mark your calendars for *FEW's Advocacy Day on September 18, 2024!* This important event has been rescheduled due to a last-minute joint session of Congress, but your advocacy remains crucial.

If you aren't scheduled to be in Washington for FEW's Advocacy Day, you can still make your voice heard by writing to your Congressional Representatives through Voter Voice. Participate from anywhere and ensure your concerns are communicated to your representatives!

This is a valuable opportunity to engage in important discussions, advocate for vital issues, and connect with like-minded individuals dedicated to making a difference.

For all of those who are not in-person you can still have an impact by writing to your members of Congress for FEW's Advocacy Day.

Don't miss out on this impactful event!

## FEW Washington Legislative Update – September 1-15, 2024 Tier II

### Federal Workforce:

The Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) is making some regulatory changes to hedge against congested workflows that could stem from potential future leadership vacancies.

After a five-year stretch without any politically appointed MSPB members led to an unprecedented backlog of roughly [3,600 undecided federal employee appeals](#), MSPB published updated operational proceedings last week to clarify how the agency would operate in the case of a future lack of quorum.

The [interim final rule](#), which was published to the Federal Register on September 9, will let the agency take certain adjudication steps to continue processing an employee appeal case even in the absence of a quorum. The intention of the update, MSPB said, is to create more efficient and expedited appeals processing at both the regional and headquarters levels, while addressing “potential flaws” in prior regulations.

Though the interim final rule will become official in just a few weeks, MSPB is still asking for feedback from stakeholders for the next 60 days. The board said it will make adjustments to the new rule, as needed, based on the input it receives.

As an agency, MSPB is responsible for adjudicating appeals on personnel cases, aiming to protect federal employees against prohibited personnel practices such as whistleblower retaliation.

(Source: [Federal News Network](#))

## FEW Washington Legislative Update – September 1-15, 2024 Tier III

### Women as a Class:

September is Violence Against Women Month  
VAWA 30<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary

*The White House: “For too long, we have ignored the right of women to be free from the fear of attack based on their gender. For too long, we have kept silent about the obvious.” – Joseph R. Biden, Jr.*

Above quote by Senator Biden speaking at a Hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, June 20, 1990.

Today, President Biden will deliver remarks at the White House to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), landmark bipartisan legislation that he wrote and championed as a U.S. Senator and has worked across the aisle to strengthen ever since. He will reflect on the significant progress we have made in reducing violence and supporting survivors as well as the work ahead to realize VAWA's promise of a nation where every woman and girl can live free from fear, free from violence, and free from abuse.

Working to end gender-based violence has been a cornerstone of President Biden's and Vice President Harris' careers. VAWA was the first comprehensive federal law to focus on preventing and addressing violence against women and to provide justice and support for survivors. The law transformed the nation's response to gender-based violence by recognizing that domestic violence and sexual assault are not a private matter but rather a violation of fundamental rights and dignity. Between 1993 and 2022, annual domestic violence rates dropped by 67 percent and the rate of rapes and sexual assaults declined by 56 percent.

In the three decades since the original VAWA was signed into law, President Biden has worked with survivors, advocates, experts, and Members of Congress of both parties to reauthorize and strengthen the law four times. As President, he signed into law the VAWA Reauthorization Act of 2022—critical legislation that expands access to safety and support for survivors, increases prevention efforts, and establishes new federal protections against online harassment and abuse. The President and Vice President also secured the highest-ever funding levels to implement VAWA, and the Biden-Harris Administration has acted quickly to implement the law's new programs and protections.

To mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VAWA, the Biden-Harris Administration is announcing the following new actions:

- Providing new funds to address gender-based violence and support survivors. The Department of Justice—the lead agency in VAWA implementation—will announce more than \$690 million in FY 2024 grant funding to support survivors of gender-based violence. This includes more than \$40 million to implement new grant programs established by the VAWA Reauthorization Act of 2022, including trauma-informed training for law enforcement, pilot programs for serving protection orders electronically, strategies to address technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and victim-centered and trauma-informed restorative practices programs that address gender-based violence. By September 30, the Department of Justice will have announced funding awards for more than 40 grant programs and initiatives to help states, Tribes, territories, law enforcement, victim advocates, and community-based organizations address gender-based violence.
- Meeting the housing needs of survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. Gender-based violence is a leading cause of homelessness for families with children. Today, five federal agencies—the Departments of Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, the Treasury, and Veterans Affairs—are issuing a [new interagency statement](#) to affirm VAWA's housing protections for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault,

dating violence, and stalking as well as other individuals, such as those who assist survivors. The new statement underscores survivors' housing rights under VAWA, identifies potential housing scenarios that highlight the need for VAWA's housing protections, and reaffirms the agencies' commitment to enforcing VAWA's expanded housing protections in a manner consistent with each agencies' authorities. The Department of Housing and Urban Development is also announcing the establishment of the Office on Gender-Based Violence, as directed by the VAWA Reauthorization Act of 2022, which is located in the Office of the Secretary and coordinates and implements policies and programs to address the safe housing, and economic stability needs of survivors.

- Addressing online harassment and abuse. The Department of Justice will announce a funding award for the new National Resource Center on Cybercrimes Against Individuals as authorized by the VAWA Reauthorization Act of 2022. This new Resource Center will help law enforcement, prosecutors, and victim services organizations prevent, enforce, and prosecute cybercrimes against individuals, including cyberstalking, the non-consensual distribution of intimate images, and other forms of technology-facilitated abuse. The Department of Justice will also announce approximately \$5.5 million in new grant funds to support local law enforcement in prosecuting cybercrimes against individuals and a \$250,000 award to provide training and technical assistance to schools and other youth-serving organizations to improve youth online safety and support young survivors of technology-facilitated abuse.
- Engaging the private sector to combat image-based sexual abuse. Image-based sexual abuse—including real images distributed without consent and synthetic content generated by artificial intelligence (AI)—has skyrocketed in recent years, disproportionately targeting women, children, and LGBTQI+ people and emerging as one of the fastest growing harmful uses of AI to date. Today, following the Vice President's leadership in underscoring the urgent need to address deepfake image-based sexual abuse and the White House Call to Action to Combat Image-Based Sexual Abuse, the Biden-Harris Administration is announcing a set of voluntary commitments from AI model developers and data providers to curb the creation of image-based sexual abuse and proactively reduce the risk of new images from being generated without someone's consent as well as ensure that known, verified instances of image-based sexual abuse are excluded from their products and systems. These actions complement new efforts from the private sector to support voluntary principles to combat image-based sexual abuse through a working group with advocates, survivors, and researchers.
- Supporting states in using federal funds to keep guns out of the hands of domestic abusers. Guns and domestic violence are a lethal combination: access to a gun makes it five times more likely that a woman will die at the hands of her abuser. State laws that require people under domestic violence-related restraining orders to turn in their firearms are associated with a 14 to 16 percent lower intimate partner firearm homicide rate. To help keep guns out of the hands of domestic abusers, the Department of Justice is expanding technical assistance and federal funding opportunities for state and local law enforcement programs that remove

firearms from domestic abusers convicted of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence or subject to a protective order. The Department's new resources—which will include training, toolkits, and best practices from the Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention Firearms Technical Assistance Project—follow a recent [Resource Guide to Address the Intersection of Domestic Violence and Firearms](#) that encourages states to use federal funds for law enforcement, prosecutors, and courts to address this critical intersection. North Carolina, for example, is pursuing opportunities to use federal funding to address firearms and domestic violence by creating training materials for judges, district attorneys and survivors.

(Source: [The White House](#))

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