



AIS TOOLKIT: THE WORKING FOR IMMIGRANT SAFETY AND EMPOWERMENT (WISE) ACT

Fall 2023

From the very first bipartisan Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) over 25 years ago, Congress created immigration protections, like VAWA self-petitions, U and T visas, so that survivors do not have to choose between living with abuse and risking deportation or separation from their families. Yet in order for survivors to realize these pathways to safety, we must ensure that the need is adequately met and survivors are protected while their applications are pending.

The [Working for Immigrant Safety and Empowerment \(WISE\) Act](#), H.R. 5145, which was reintroduced by U.S. Representatives Pramila Jayapal (WA-07), Jan Schakowsky (IL-09), Adriano Espaillat (NY-13), and Jimmy Panetta (CA-20) in August 2023, aims to safeguard and improve existing protections for immigrant survivors in order to help them achieve safety and justice.

What Does WISE Do?

WISE will offer immigrant survivors pathways to safety by:

- **Lifting the U visa and Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) caps and making these programs more accessible**
- **Preventing detention and deportation of immigrant survivors with pending immigration cases**
- **Requiring issuance of work authorization within 180 days of filing**
- **Ensuring immigrant survivors with pending cases are eligible for critical federal public benefits, and no longer subject to the five-year bar**
- **Limiting immigration enforcement at protected areas**
- **Strengthening confidentiality and privacy protections for immigrant survivors**
- **Improving access to naturalization for abused spouses of US citizens**

immigrantsurvivors.org | info@immigrantsurvivors.org | [@4ImmSurvivors](https://twitter.com/4ImmSurvivors)

The [Alliance for Immigrant Survivors](#) is a national network of advocates and allies dedicated to defending and advocating for policies that ensure immigrant survivors of gender-based violence have access to critical and life-saving protections.

For questions or inquiries, please email info@immigrantsurvivors.org.

For more information about why these protections are critical for immigrant survivors, see our [WISE Act one-pager \(PDF/En Español\)](#). To access and share our WISE Act Toolkit, visit www.immigrantsurvivors.org/wise ([En Español](#)).

Take Action in Support of the WISE Act!

Your advocacy is key to creating critical advances for immigrant survivors of violence, especially now as October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Please feel free to use the content in this toolkit and customize templates and content to align with your organization's mission, voice, and the communities you serve.

Contact Your Congress Member and Ask Them to Co-Sponsor WISE Act

[Find your Congress Member](#)

Sample Email Script for Scheduling a Visit:

Dear [Congressperson's Office],

My name is [NAME] and I work at/volunteer with [ORGANIZATION]. We work with [ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS/ GROUPS] and we would like to request a meeting with Congressperson [NAME] to discuss critical protections for immigrant survivors of gender-based violence.

We would like to share with you the concerns we have about immigrant survivors in our community being afraid to access resources and institutions designed for their protection. We'd like to discuss the immense hardship survivors face while they are waiting for their immigration cases to be decided by USCIS, which can take years. [Identify who will be coming from your office and other agencies].

We are available on the following days and times and would need less than an hour of the Congressperson's time [LIST DATE/TIMES]. Please let me know if and when Congressperson [NAME] is available to meet. We would greatly appreciate the chance to meet to discuss these important issues further. Thank you for your time and help, and please contact me at [email address] if you need additional information.

Sample Email Script for Urging Your Congress Member to Co-Sponsor WISE:

Dear [Congress Member],

My name is [NAME] and I am a resident of [CITY/STATE] and I am a voter in Representative [NAME's] district.

*I am writing to urge you to support The Working for Immigrant Safety and Empowerment Act, introduced by Representative Pramila Jayapal. WISE will provide critical protections for immigrant survivors of domestic and sexual violence and human trafficking in our community. **Because immigrant survivors face so many barriers to accessing safety and justice, we ask Representative [NAME] to co-sponsor this critical bill.***

As the [TITLE/ ORGANIZATION], WISE is critical and necessary to the communities we serve because [ADD YOUR PERSPECTIVE / ANY STORIES].. Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter.

Spread Awareness about the WISE Act on Social Media

Tag [@4ImmSurvivors](#) and our partners and co-chairs [@PIFCoalition](#), [@ndvh](#), [@nnedv](#), [@apigbv](#), [@EsperanzaUnited](#), [@tahirihjustice](#), [@ASISTAsurvivors](#) on Twitter and use hashtags #WISEAct, #ImmigrantSurvivors, #ProtectFamilies, and #DVAM2023 on all platforms.

Rep. Pramila Jayapal joined with AIS co-chairs ASISTA, the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence, Tahirih Justice Center, and Esperanza United to create a video explaining the importance of WISE: <https://bit.ly/Support-WISE-Act>.

Please share any of our WISE resources with your networks in the sample social media posts below, including:

- WISE Toolkit (webpage): www.immigrantsurvivors.org/wise
- WISE One-pager (webpage): <https://www.immigrantsurvivors.org/wise-act-2023-onepager> / (PDF): <https://www.immigrantsurvivors.org/wise-act-2023-onepager> / [En Español](#)
- WISE Video: bit.ly/Support-WISE-Act
- Call to Action - Email your representative to co-sponsor: <https://act.tahirih.org/a/wiseact2023>

Twitter

Ask your Member of Congress to co-sponsor WISE:

- .[@Tag your Representative] Congress must pass the [#WISEAct](#) to ensure [#ImmigrantSurvivors](#) of violence have pathways to safety and justice. [LINK TO VIDEO OR WISE ONEPAGER]

- The #WISEAct is an opportunity for Congress to enhance protections for #ImmigrantSurvivors who need relief NOW. [@Tag your Representative], will you co-sponsor this important bill?

Thank Rep. Jaypal and support WISE:

- Thank you @RepJaypal for introducing the #WISEAct to provide real economic and immigration relief to #ImmigrantSurvivors. [LINK TO VIDEO OR WISE ONEPAGER]
- We must ensure #ImmigrantSurvivors of violence have access to critical immigration protections for themselves and their families. The #WISEAct introduced by @RepJaypal creates pathways to safety and justice.
- We must ensure #ImmigrantSurvivors have access to resources to support themselves and their families. We support the #WISEAct, which would provide real relief to survivors.
- The Alliance for Immigrant Survivors highlights the urgent need for Congress to pass the #WISEAct and ensure #ImmigrantSurvivors can seek safety and stability. We couldn't agree more! @4ImmSurvivors

Inform your networks about what WISE can achieve:

- The #WISEAct lifts the U Visa cap, helping guide this vital program toward what Congress intended and realizing protections for #ImmigrantSurvivors experiencing #DomesticViolence. [LINK TO VIDEO OR WISE ONEPAGER]
- #ImmigrantSurvivors are experiencing egregious delays in the processing of their U Visas which can subject them and their families to additional risks of violence, manipulation & trauma. The #WISEAct lifts the U Visa cap to help meet the need and promote the safety of survivors.
- The #WISEAct will strengthen access to immigration protections for #ImmigrantSurvivors by reducing the multi-year backlog by lifting the U Visa cap so that everyone who is eligible has an opportunity to efficiently access the relief that Congress intended for them.
- Abusers and perpetrators of crime use threats of deportation as a potent tool to maintain control over and silence #ImmigrantSurvivors. The #WISEAct will prevent detention and deportation of survivors with pending immigration cases.
- The opportunity to work is critical to #ImmigrantSurvivors' ability to escape violence and provide for themselves and their families. The #WISEAct requires issuance of work authorization within 180 days of filing .
- Access to public benefits allows #ImmigrantSurvivors of violence to seek safety and stability. The #WISEAct will ensure survivors with pending immigration cases are eligible for critical federal public benefits such as housing, healthcare, food, and childcare assistance.

- The [#WISEAct](#) puts limits on immigration enforcement in protected areas, locations where [#ImmigrantSurvivors](#) frequently access support including health care facilities, domestic violence shelters, victim services agencies, courthouses, places of worship, and more.
- The [#WISEAct](#) makes the naturalization process more accessible for spouses of US citizen abusers, further streamlining the path to safety for immigrant survivors. Learn more about the WISE Act here: [LINK TO VIDEO OR WISE ONEPAGER]

Facebook and Instagram

The Working for Immigrant Safety and Empowerment (WISE) Act is a comprehensive bill, recently introduced by @RepJayapal, that extends critical immigration benefits to immigrant survivors of violence. The [#WISEAct](#) aims to safeguard and improve existing protections for immigrant survivors in order to help them achieve safety and justice.

Among other advances, the WISE Act reduces the multi-year backlog by lifting the U Visa cap making the program more accessible, prevents detention and deportation of immigrant survivors with pending immigration cases and allows them to access critical federal public benefits, speeds up work authorization to help survivors escape violence, limits immigration enforcement at protected areas, and improves access to naturalization for abused spouses of US citizens. To find out more about why these protections are critical for immigrant survivors, see <https://www.immigrantsurvivors.org/wise-act-2023-onepager>.

Graphics ([Gráficos En Español](#))

Download graphics to include in any of your social media posts along with the content above.





Background Resources to Inform Your Advocacy

- [Immigrant Crime Fighters: How the U Visa Program Makes US Communities Safer](#), Human Rights Watch
- [Freezing Out Justice: How immigration arrests at courthouses are undermining the justice system](#), VAWnet
- [Broken Promise: Visa Program Leaves Crime Victims In Limbo](#), Law360
- [Fewer Immigrants Are Reporting Domestic Abuse. Police Blame Fear of Deportation.](#), *New York Times*
- [IN HARM'S WAY: The Impact of President Trump's Actions on Immigrant Survivors of Gender-based Violence](#), ILRC & ASISTA
- [GOOD NEWS: Biden Admin Announces Deferred Action for youth in SIJS backlog!](#), End SIJS Backlog