

# Keep talking about domestic-violence victims

By Darlene Thomas

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Last month marked the 23rd anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act. As often happens during annual milestones, reflection on this not-so-distant past was the topic of conversation among advocates in my mission.

We recalled how many members of Congress contested the need for a federal law to protect victims and remembered debates that referred to domestic violence as a private family matter. Some opponents argued the act was a threat to marriage; others obstructed protections based on fiscal concerns. Our nation was talking about domestic violence, and these were difficult conversations with deep roots and many intersections.

Local organizing bolstered public support, and VAWA passed in 1994. It created programs to provide legal assistance, safe exchange and visitation for children, transitional housing for survivors and their children, and community-coordinated response to the crimes. These new efforts complemented existing support from the Victims of Crime Act and encouraged the expansion of state and local programs.

Read more here: [http://www.kentucky.com/opinion/op-ed/article178761816.html?anf=TOP\\_STO...](http://www.kentucky.com/opinion/op-ed/article178761816.html?anf=TOP_STO...)

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