

Capitol Hill Celebration Marks Historic Step to Stop Violence Against Foreign Fiancées



Joanne Lin, Legal Momentum Senior Staff Attorney with Representative Rick Larson (D-WA), a key IMBRA sponsor, at the Tahirih Justice Center Celebration.

Members of Legal Momentum, our coalition partners and members of Congress gathered on February 1 to celebrate the passage of the International Marriage Broker Regulation Act of 2005 (IMBRA). Part of the expanded Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) enacted in last January, IMBRA will help foreign women decide if they should wed U.S. citizen men and immigrate to America. IMBRA equips these women with vital information about U.S. domestic abuse laws and resources, as well as personal background

information (including certain criminal convictions) on their prospective husbands.

"This is ground breaking legislation," says Legal Momentum Immigrant Women Program Senior Staff Attorney Joanne Lin. "IMBRA is an important part of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which is Legal Momentum's signature legislation.

The reauthorization of VAWA 2005 is the first time Congress has passed legislation designed to prevent domestic abuse even before the foreign fiancée arrives in the U.S."

Between 9,500 and 14,500 foreign fiancées enter the U.S. each year. Unfortunately, some of these matches, usually arranged by international marriage brokers, have ended tragically. Since 1995 at least three women have been murdered by the men whom they've met through international marriage brokers. Unclear is the number of women who have been physically, psychologically or sexually abused.

"The brokers' web sites sell the unrealistic expectations of a story book romance to women and men. IMBRA can help write a more realistic story and save lives," adds Lin.