

# UTFAV Newsletter

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UNITING THREE FIRES  
AGAINST VIOLENCE

EDUCATING  
ADVOCATING  
RESEARCHING

## Federal Legislation: Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act

On February 7, 2017 the Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act was reintroduced to Senate by U.S. Senators Gary Peters (D-MI) and Dean Heller (R-NV). The bipartisan legislation will provide protections for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and dating violence from the emotional and psychological trauma stemming from violence against their pets.

Pets are often an easy target for threats and/or abuse from perpetrators. It is common for victims to be reluctant to leave their abusive home if

they cannot bring their pets with them. Unfortunately only about 3% of shelters accept pets.

“Abusers often exploit the emotional attachment victims have with their pets, leaving victims of domestic violence stuck choosing between their own safety or leaving a beloved pet in harm’s way,” said Michigan Senator Peters. “I’m proud to join my colleagues in introducing this bipartisan legislation that will help empower victims to leave abusive situations, get a fresh

start and keep their pets who are treasured members of their families.”

If you would like more information about the PAWS Act, please call UTFAV at 906-253-9775. or email [rcarr@utfav.org](mailto:rcarr@utfav.org).



### How Does The PAWS Act Protect Survivors?

- Expands existing federal domestic violence protections to include threats or acts of violence against a victim’s pet.
- Provides grant funding to programs that offer shelter and housing assistance for domestic violence victims with pets.
- Requires the full amount of the victim's losses for purposes of restitution in domestic violence and stalking offenses to include any costs incurred for veterinary services relating to physical care for the victim's pet.

## Michigan Legislation: Senate Bills 152 and 153 House Bill 4190

In February 2017, bipartisan legislation was introduced in the Michigan Senate and Michigan House of Representatives. Senate Bills 152 and 153 (introduced by Senators Tonya Schuitmaker (R) and Rebekkah Warren (D)) seek to help survivors seeking medical treatment resulting from a sexual

assault. House Bill 4190 (introduced by the Representative Laura Cox (R)) will change criminal law procedures

and allow courts to consider an assailant's prior history of sexual assault. If you would like more information about this

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Michigan State Legislation, please email [rcarr@utfav.org](mailto:rcarr@utfav.org).

### How Do These Bills Help Survivors?

- Provide funds to healthcare providers to cover costs of hospital room fees, rape test kits and other medical treatment provided to survivors.
- Fund the highly specific training of medical staff to tend to survivors of sexual assault.
- Allows the use of a defendant’s history of all sexual assault as evidence, currently only defendant’s history of sexual abuse against a minor is considered as evidence.

# Uniting Three Fires Against Violence Updates!

## Tribal Youth Summit



We are hosting our first tribal youth wellness summit to educate our tribal youth on healthy relationships, bystander intervention, and wellness. Our event will be hosted on May 09 & 10, 2017 at the Ralph A. MacMullan Center in Roscommon, MI. The MacMullan Center is a summer camp style conference center which features lake access, firepits and meeting space.

The youth will share a bunkroom (a room with two beds) along with shared bathroom/shower space. We are asking that tribal youth participants are

accompanied by adult chaperones that are gender specific to the youth attending (Example: If two female youth are attending, we expect a female chaperone to attend as well). If a Tribe intends to send both male and female youth, it is expected that both male and female chaperones will attend as well.

The conference will begin the afternoon of May 09 at 1:00 p.m. and will conclude May 10, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. Uniting Three Fires Against Violence will provide the cost of lodging and meals for each participant and chaperone. If you know of Tribal youth who may be interested in attending, please contact Hali McKelvie at 906-253-9775 or hmckelvie@utfav.org.



# Attention!

## Statewide Advocate Meetings

UTFAV is working with Leslie O'Reilly (VOCA State Administrator) to re-establish the statewide advocates meetings that used to happen several times a year. Currently, Hannahville, Sault Ste. Marie and Bay Mills have offered to host the meetings at their sites. As planning continues, advocates will be notified of the date and location of each meeting. Our hope is that the meeting will allow for: Leslie O'Reilly (State Administrator of VOCA) to address the advocates regarding VOCA funding; time for general discussion/concerns from advocates; and a potential opportunity to receive training/education on topics to be determined. UTFAV does have travel monies to assist those tribes that do not receive VOCA funds to attend these upcoming meetings.

## Uniting Three Fires Against Violence

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*Uniting Three Fires Against Violence is Michigan's Native American Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition. Our mission is to support Michigan Tribes in promoting the social change necessary to address the disproportionate rates of violence impacting our communities. We are dedicated to providing resources, safety and advocacy to ensure the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being of Native Americans victimized by violence.*

*For more information about Uniting Three Fires Against Violence, please contact us at 906-253-9975.*