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THE DAILY REPORT

House Speaker Boehner Names Members for Nonexistent VAWA Conference Committee

July 31, 2012 — House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) on Monday named eight House Republicans to serve on a conference committee to negotiate a final agreement on the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, even though no committee has been established, *Politico's* "On Congress Blog" reports (Min Kim, "On Congress Blog," *Politico*, 7/30).

The House and Senate have been at an impasse over reauthorizing the law since they each approved different versions earlier this year. One of the main issues is that House leaders say the Senate version (S 1925) violates the constitutional requirement that all revenue-raising bills originate in the House, given that it contains a \$30 fee associated with temporary visas for undocumented immigrants who are victims of abuse (Gramlich, *CQ Today*, 7/30).

If Senate Democrats agree to a conference without approving a bill that complies with the constitutional requirement, they would be forced to concede the provision regarding undocumented immigrants, according to *Roll Call* (Shiner, *Roll Call*, 7/31). Unlike the House version (HR 4970), the Senate version contains provisions aimed at protecting Native American women and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals ("On Congress Blog," *Politico*, 7/30).

A senior Democratic aide on Monday said Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) is considering naming his own conferees. However, there is little indication as to whether that would lead to the creation of a formal conference committee, according to *CQ Today* (*CQ Today*, 7/30). Both chambers are scheduled to start summer recess next week.

The Republicans whom Boehner selected to represent the House in talks are Reps. Sandy Adams (Fla.), Mary Bono Mack (Calif.), Shelley Capito (W.Va.), Trey Gowdy (S.C.), Nan Hayworth (N.Y.), Cathy Rodgers (Wash.) and Jim Sensenbrenner (Wis.), along with Judiciary Committee Chair Lamar Smith (Texas) (*Roll Call*, 7/31).

The information contained in this publication reflects media coverage of women's health issues and does not necessarily reflect the views of the National Partnership for Women & Families.

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House, Senate deadlock over anti-domestic violence bill

By TARINI PARTI |
7/26/12 4:12 PM EDT

Senate Democrats renewed their push for the Violence Against Women's Act Thursday, exactly three months after it passed the Senate in a 68-31 vote.

Sens. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Richard Blumenthal (D-Ct.) said at a news conference that the Republican leadership is using a procedural excuse to avoid taking it up.

(PHOTOS: Today on the Hill (<http://www.politico.com/gallery/2012/07/today-on-the-hill/000308-003987.html>))

Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) and Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) have maintained that the Senate bill is unconstitutional because it includes a revenue provision. Technically, bills that include revenue provisions are supposed to originate in the House.

"It's nothing more than a procedural detraction that's been routinely overcome," Murray said, citing the transportation bill, which also included a revenue provision, as the most recent example.

The Violence Against Women Act was first enacted in 1994 and has been renewed twice. The Senate bill that passed in April added new protections to cover undocumented immigrants, same-sex partners and Native American women.

The House's version of the bill does not include the new provisions, and Democrats have argued that it would actually weaken existing provisions for victims of domestic violence. Twenty-three Republicans voted against the House version.

Cantor said on the floor Thursday that he would be willing to go to conference committee to resolve the difference between the bills.


But both Murray and Boxer said they would not compromise.

"There is no reason to pull these provisions out," Murray said. "There is no reason to have to go to conference."

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Dems Stonewall Boehner's Efforts To Scale Back Domestic Violence Bill



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Senate Democrats are rebuffing House Speaker John Boehner's (R-OH) push for bicameral negotiations to finalize the Violence Against Women Act, exercising their clout to demand the House pass their expanded bipartisan version.

On Monday, Boehner appointed eight members to an unformed conference committee: Reps. Sandy Adams (R-FL), Mary Bono Mack (R-CA), Trey Gowdy (R-SC), Nan Hayworth (R-NY), Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI) and Judiciary Committee Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX).

A senior Senate Democratic aide dismissed Boehner's move.

"This shows that Boehner is clearly feeling the heat from women's groups after having passed a bill that leaves millions of women in the LGBT, tribal, and immigration communities out. He is in an unsustainable spot and Democrats know it," the aide said. "Moving forward means House Republicans dropping their opposition to including these groups in a final bill."

The office of Sen. Patty Murray (WA), a Democratic leadership member and point person on the issue, referred TPM to comments she made last week refusing to pare back the bill. "There is no reason to have to go to conference," she told reporters.

The traditionally noncontroversial legislation to re-authorize funding for law enforcement to combat domestic violence has been in limbo for months. On a 68-31 vote late April, the Senate passed an expanded version to cover same sex couples, illegal immigrants and Native

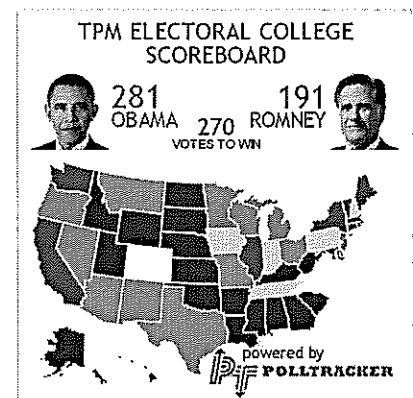
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Americans. House Republicans responded by passing a scaled-back version on a party line vote, which also makes it harder for abused undocumented victims to gain legal status.

Boehner has sought to gain leverage since then by labeling the Senate bill invalid on the grounds that it includes a revenue-raising mechanism, something the Constitution says must originate in the House. Democrats call it a procedural hurdle that can easily be overcome.

"Completing work on legislation to renew and strengthen the Violence Against Women Act is critical in our efforts to combat domestic violence and sexual assault," Boehner said in his Monday statement. "The law has broad, bipartisan support in both chambers, and I'm announcing our negotiators today in the hopes that we can begin to resolve the differences between the House and Senate bills. The House is ready and willing to begin those discussions, and I would urge Senate Democrats to come to the table so this critical legislation can be sent to the president for his signature as soon as possible."

For now at least, Democrats aren't having any of it. Fresh off their hard-won Senate victory on the Bush-era tax cuts, and 100 days out from Election Day, Democrats are displaying a fortitude rarely seen since they last came to power.

On Tuesday, Vice President Joe Biden, the original sponsor of VAWA in 1994, published an op-ed in McClatchy criticizing the GOP's scaled-back re-authorization and calling on House Republicans to accept the Senate legislation.

"Congress should pass the bipartisan version approved by the U.S. Senate," he wrote.

TOPICS: John Boehner, Patty Murray, Violence Against Women Act



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