**Template Letter to MPs – Report Stage of the Domestic Abuse Bill**

Dear [INSERT NAME OF MP HERE]

I am writing to you as your constituent based in [INSERT NAME OF YOUR BOROUGH HERE], and a supporter of [Latin American Women’s Aid](http://lawadv.org.uk/en/) (LAWA)

I am writing ahead of the Report Stage of the Domestic Abuse Bill in the House of Commons.

I know that this legislation has the potential to deliver a step change in the response to domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG). It includes some welcome measures, particularly the guarantee that all survivors will be in ‘priority need’ for housing and the recent announcement for eligible for special measures in the family courts. But we are clear that the Bill must go far further if it is to deliver the changes survivors need and fix the funding crisis we continue to face. Most urgently, the legislation continue to exclude migrant women – who face insurmountable barriers to escaping domestic abuse and are routinely denied their rights to safety and support. Just 5.8% of refuge vacancies in England are accessible to a woman with no recourse to public funds.

**I urge you to attend the Report Stage of the Domestic Abuse Bill and urge the government to deliver equal protection and support for migrant women.** This is a fundamental priority, identified by cross-party MPs at all debates on the legislation so far, yet the Bill still contains no provisions at all to do so. As our local MP, I am urging you to support the following proposed amendments, led by the [Step Up Migrant Women campaign](https://stepupmigrantwomen.org/), at Report Stage:

* Extend the eligibility criteria for the Domestic Violence Rule and Destitute Domestic Violence Concession to all migrant women to ensure they can access a refuge space.
* Include a ‘non-discrimination’ clause in the Bill to ensure all survivors, regardless of immigration status, are entitled to support and protection.
* Establish a ‘firewall’ to separate immigration control from the public services survivors seek help from, alongside safe and confidential reporting systems for those with insecure status.

The lack of funding underpinning the Bill also remains a severe concern for organisations like LAWA and other black and minoritised groups.The statutory duty included in the Bill is welcome, but it must clarify that councils are obliged to fund specialist refuge services supporting women and children escaping abuse, not generic ‘accommodation’ based services, and be underpinned with robust national oversight. Long-term, sustainable funding for all specialist VAWG services also must be delivered alongside the Bill. Women’s Aid Federation England estimates that an investment of £393 million for specialist women’s domestic abuse services is needed per year, including £173million for the national network of refuge services, and ring-fenced funding for services led ‘by and for’ Black and minoritised women, disabled women and LGBT survivors.

I urge you to attend the debate and next week and speak up for survivors in [CONSTITUENCY], particularly women with insecure immigration status who are too often facing a devastating ‘choice’ of remaining with an abuser or experiencing destitution or deportation if they leave.

Yours sincerely,

[INSERT YOUR NAME HERE]