

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 11, 2014

His Excellency Hamid Karzai  
President, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Dear President Karzai:

We write to urge you not to sign into law the proposed legislation modifying the Afghan criminal procedure code. This legislation, if enacted, would have a significant detrimental impact on the prosecution of domestic violence and other crimes against women and girls in Afghanistan. We are deeply concerned that this legislation would prohibit family members from testifying against an offender—making it more difficult to seek justice for these heinous crimes.

Over the past decade, Afghanistan has made important progress on women's rights. Millions of girls are attending school, women are being elected to public office, and many more have joined the civil service and the Afghan National Army and Police. You have demonstrated your commitment to improving the lives of Afghan women and girls—including by enacting the groundbreaking *Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women* (EVAW) in 2009.

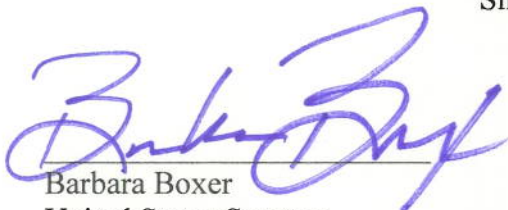
However, Afghan women and girls continue to face substantial challenges including high rates of domestic violence. A recent United Nations report found that reported cases of violence against women went up 28 percent in the last year, while at the same time prosecutions only increased by 2 percent. These statistics illustrate the obstacles that women and girls already face in their quest for justice.

There is widespread concern in Afghanistan that article 26 of the new criminal procedure code could further impede efforts to prosecute serious crimes against women including domestic violence. It is important not to weaken the legal protections that you so strongly afforded Afghan women and girls with the EVAW Law.

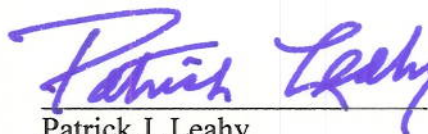
We are so hopeful for a bright future for all Afghans, but we believe that signing this legislation would be a step backwards for Afghanistan's mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters. As such, we urge you to refrain from signing legislation to modify the criminal procedure code until article 26 is either removed or revised to conform with the EVAW Law.

Thank you for your consideration.

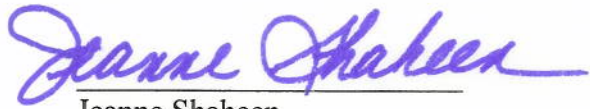
Sincerely,



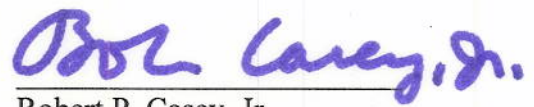
Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



Patrick J. Leahy  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator