FOIA-6

Sent: Fri, 18 May 2012 20:50:32 -0400
From: "Person, Fran" <fran_person@ovp.eop.gov>
To: hurricane5155@gmail.com, 261penn@gmail.com, hbiden@rosemontseneca.com, [redacted] ashley.biden@state.de.us, [redacted] jill.tracy2@gmail.com, [redacted] jbiden@lionhallgp.com, sbiden@lionhallgp.com, [redacted] [redacted] robinware456@gmail.com
Subject: Press Recap
Clips_5 18 2012.docx

Shailagh Murray and the Press Office put together the attached press packet which recaps some of the VP's Press Clippings from the past trip couple of days. It is great! I will also copy and paste it below in case you can't open the attachment.

Have a great weekend!

Fran

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN
PRESS RECAP

MAY 18, 2012

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NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PRINT COVERAGE

Politico
BIDEN: 'How about some ice cream?'
By: Byron Tau / May 16, 2012

Vice President Joe BIDEN surprised patrons at an Ohio Dairy Queen with an unannounced visit Wednesday night.

On a two-day campaign swing through the Buckeye state, BIDEN stopped in the Hollywood City Center Dairy Queen in Steubenville, Ohio for a cone.

Locals Chris and Diane Murphy, stopping at the shop after their daughter's softball game, were surprised by the vice president's unexpected arrival.

"My daughter had played a softball game at Beaver Local and we ran into traffic on state Route 7 coming home. We had heard Vice President BIDEN was coming to the city but never expected to see him walk into Dairy Queen," Chris Murphy told reporters traveling with the vice president.

BIDEN spotted the Murphy children and offered to buy them ice cream after some banter.

"Do you play football?" BIDEN asked one of them. "I played when I was in school. Where do you play at?"

"Catholic Central High School," he replied.

"How about some ice cream?" BIDEN then asked.

"If I knew you were coming I would have waited for you to buy me ice cream," another patron shouted.

BIDEN bought several cones and milkshakes before departing a few minutes later.

CNN
BIDEN'S campaign trail goes where Obama's won't
By: Paul Steinhauser / May 16, 2012

Vice President Joe BIDEN kicks off a two-day swing Wednesday through the eastern edge of the must-win battleground state of Ohio, an area that President Barack Obama is unlikely to visit this election year.

And while the vice president apologized to the president last week for seemingly jumping the gun on the issue of same-sex marriage, this trip is an illustration of just how valuable BIDEN is for Obama as he bids for a second term in the White House.

"As much as political insiders joke about Joe BIDEN, he's indispensable to the Obama ticket," says Republican strategist and CNN contributor Alex Castellanos.

According to the Obama re-election campaign, the vice president will travel to Ohio's Mahoning and Ohio valleys "to highlight the impact of President Obama's efforts to strengthen the region's manufacturing and auto industries, as well as bolster middle-class security for Ohio's workers."

The campaign says BIDEN will speak at an advanced manufacturing facility in Youngstown and at a Chevrolet dealership in Martins Ferry.

The general manger of the dealership, Joe Staffilino II, says he's "really surprised" that the vice president is dropping by and that people in the area "are real excited about the visit."

It's not an area friendly to Obama, said Paul Beck, professor of political science at The Ohio State University.

"These are areas of traditional Democratic strength, steel working areas, areas with a lot of working class Democrats from the old days. President Obama has not played well there," Beck

explained.

Obama was soundly defeated by then-Sen. Hillary Clinton in southeast and eastern Ohio in the Democratic presidential primary in March 2008, and while he won the state by five points over Sen. John McCain in the general election that November, he didn't perform as well in the eastern edge of the state.

"Part of the problem is that these tend to be more conservative Democrats. For some of them his race may be an issue, probably not among the younger ones but among some of the older voters. These tend to be depressed areas, with a lot of job loss over the past couple of decades. There are deeply entrenched pockets of unemployment and economic distress," Beck added.

BIDEN grew up in Scranton, in neighboring Pennsylvania, an area that's also witnessed tough times in the past few decades.

"These are places where I think Joe BIDEN has particular appeal, as a kind of traditional Democrat of the old school. He comes from a part of Pennsylvania that's very much like the eastern part of Ohio. I think he can really connect with voters there in a way which President Obama cannot," Beck said.

The president's been to Ohio 21 times since taking office. But only two of those trips took him through the state's eastern edge.

But it's not just Obama -- presumptive Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney was edged out by former Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania in much of the region in the March GOP primary. Santorum gave his primary night speech in the Ohio River valley city of Steubenville.

Beck predicted that Romney will likely not "be able to connect with (eastern Ohio voters) well either" ahead of the November election.

Which is why BIDEN may come in so handy in blue-collar areas in eastern Ohio, western and central Pennsylvania, and in parts of Michigan.

"His working-class honesty cuts through all the political bull in Washington. He grounds Obama in the real world. In blue-collar swing states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan, Joe BIDEN is a tremendous asset to Obama who, at times, makes voters feel like he is president of the elite, for the elite, and by the elite," added Castellanos, who was a top media adviser for Romney's 2008 nomination bid, but who stayed neutral in this year's battle for the GOP nomination.

Democratic strategist and CNN contributor Paul Begala agrees.

"Unlike Mitt Romney, Joe BIDEN can talk to middle-class people without an interpreter. Even though he's traveled the globe and is one of the most powerful people in the world, he's still Joe -- a middle-class guy from Scranton.

"BIDEN'S ability to connect with working families is one of the Obama campaign's greatest assets. I bet they'll be seeing a lot of him in the next six months," said Begala, who was a top adviser in the Clinton White House and who now is a senior adviser to Priorities USA, the pro-Obama super PAC.

But some Republicans disagree about BIDEN'S value to the Democratic ticket. "It speaks to President Obama's vulnerability that the campaign has to rely on Vice President BIDEN to campaign in key states like Ohio because Obama can't identify with voters. Between his infamous gaffes and his liberal positions on the free market and our nation's debt, having BIDEN on the stump carries its own set of risks," Republican National Committee press secretary Kirsten Kukowski told CNN.

BIDEN'S been in the spotlight recently for his comments a week and a half ago on NBC's "Meet the Press," that he was "absolutely comfortable" with legal same-sex marriages, a position that the president had yet to take. Obama was forced to speed up his timetable on the issue and come out with his own comments approving the unions three days later.

Some political pundits said that BIDEN was a liability to the president, while others pointed to the argument that running mates rarely matter in the race for the White House.

"Sure, people vote for the top of the ticket, but this election will likely turn on who can build an economy for the middle class," Begala said. "If that's the question, BIDEN is a big part of the answer."

"If I were BIDEN, I would keep Obama on my ticket," Castellanos said.

Politico
Joe BIDEN'S map
By: CHARLES MAHTESIAN / May 16, 2012

Previewing Vice President Joe BIDEN'S two-day Ohio swing, CNN's Political Ticker takes note of BIDEN'S map — and how he's able to connect with white, working-class voters in a way that President Barack Obama hasn't been able to.

For all the chatter about his gaffe-prone ways, BIDEN'S old-school campaign trail style and Rust Belt roots make him a asset with blue-collar voters in places like Ohio and Pennsylvania.

From Paul Steinhauser's report:

Vice President Joe BIDEN kicks off a two-day swing Wednesday through the eastern edge of the must-win battleground state of Ohio, an area that President Barack Obama is unlikely to visit this election year.

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Huffington Post

Joe BIDEN'S Good Moves
By: Robert Hoopes, President, VOX Global / May 17, 2012

Vice President Joe BIDEN is spending some time in the Ohio Valley and in the process reminding voters, the Romney campaign and folks in the West Wing that he will be a formidable force in this year's presidential campaign. BIDEN connects with key voters who are critical to winning this year's election.

In Youngstown, Ohio, the vice president delivered a widely covered speech that, as much as any event in this campaign to date, set up the choice in November. Elections are about choices and BIDEN artfully drew the line for these key voters when he told them:

More than any other candidate on the ticket in November (we will see who Mitt Romney picks as his running mate), BIDEN'S down-to-earth, regular guy persona stands out and resonates with voters. And it stands in sharp contrast to Romney's personal and professional narrative. Ironically, Romney has been remarkably silent on his personal narrative, faith and private life, choosing instead to put his "Mr. Fix It" financial persona front and center for voters. The idea of the head of Bain Capital as the head of government won't sit well with these swing voters. Harry Truman was "Mr. Fix It"; Mitt Romney is "Mr. Pull it Apart, Sell the Pieces and Make Money at the Expense of the Worker."

Ironically for Romney, working class Americans are not opposed to wealthy presidents. To the contrary. The two wealthiest men to serve in the White House were our first and third presidents, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Among the modern presidency, Presidents Johnson, Hoover, Roosevelt, Clinton and Kennedy comprise the sixth through tenth wealthiest presidents. Among this list is only a single Republican. Democrats and swing voters do vote for the 1 percent. But the "Romney rich" just doesn't feel right to so many voters, and BIDEN has tapped into that source of discomfort: "They don't get us! They don't get who we are".

Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Roosevelt had a common touch with the common man (though the common woman has now also become critical). Romney's touch is rehearsed and awkward, and for most voters, the only time they will touch a $2,000 suit is when they slap Mitt Romney on the back. Romney's list of phony common touch assertions range from immigration gaffes, betting Governor Perry $10,000, and claiming he knows what it's like to be out of work. Check the top 10 list from Rolling Stone here.

As BIDEN demonstrated in Ohio, his touch is genuine and natural.

To prove his point, BIDEN hit a DQ for some ice cream for him and his staff after a spaghetti dinner Wednesday night. Think Romney ever took the Bain team to DQ after raiding and dismantling many of their corporate acquisitions? No; they likely went to Morton's and ate with the 1 percent.

NATIONAL OTHER PRINT COVERAGE

The New Yorker
L.B.J.'s BIDEN Moment
By: George Packer / May 15, 2012

In one of those coincidences that get you thinking in historical analogies, President Obama announced his support for same-sex marriage just a few days after the publication of Robert Caro's fourth volume on the life of Lyndon B. Johnson, "The Passage of Power." Obama arrived at his position in very much the way that John F. Kennedy decided to put the force of the White House behind civil rights: slowly, reluctantly, and with a big assist from his overlooked, often ridiculed Vice-President.

I spent the summer of 1980 as an intern at a legal-aid office in southern Alabama, and in the houses of poor black people I got used to seeing a sign on the wall that said, “The three who set us free,” beneath pictures of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. It always struck me as unfair that Johnson had been erased from history, not just in those homes in Alabama, but in the judgment of liberal-minded Americans all over the country. After all, it was President Johnson who got civil rights and voting rights passed, along with the entire program of social-justice legislation known as the Great Society.

For their part, President Kennedy and his brother, the attorney general, spent their first two and a half years in office doing everything possible to avoid taking a position on the central moral issue of their time. The Freedom Rides, sit-ins, James Meredith, Albany, Georgia, Birmingham, and Bull Connor—time after time, the Kennedys watched Americans risking and giving their lives for basic rights and refused to take a clear side. Instead, the President urged patience and talked about enforcing laws and court orders, as if it were a purely legal question. In May, 1963, in the midst of police violence and massive arrests of schoolchildren in Birmingham, Kennedy was asked by a reporter whether it would be useful to speak to the country on the issue.

“Well, it might. If I thought it would I would give one,” was his non-committal answer. The next day, Erwin Griswold, a member of Kennedy’s civil-rights commission, said, “It seems clear to me that he hasn’t even started to use the powers that are available to him.” According to Richard Reeves’s “President Kennedy: Profile of Power,” Kennedy privately fumed, “That son-of-a-bitch! Let him try.” Compared with his attitude toward the unfolding Buddhist crisis in Saigon that same month, “The President seemed more detached about the events in Birmingham,” Reeves wrote. “ ‘Life is unfair,’ he had said many times. His sense of irony and his wit kept him out of corners where he might have to choose between right and wrong.”

A month later, on June 10th, after another crisis—Governor George Wallace blocking the door to the University of Alabama—Kennedy finally gave the speech, on national television, from the Oval Office. It was one of the best and most important of his Presidency. “This is not a sectional issue,” he told the country.

Nor is this a partisan issue…This is not even a legal or legislative issue alone…We are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is as old as the Scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution.
From then on, there was little doubt that the President of the United States stood with the marchers, and not the police—although Kennedy was unable to get his civil-rights bill through Congress and left it to his successor to succeed where he had not.

History remembers that much, even if most Americans forget. But what the great Robert Caro has revealed is the role L.B.J. played in civil rights during the Kennedy years. Ignored and humiliated by both brothers, convinced that his political life—that is, his whole life—was over, Johnson only showed signs of his old vitality when it came to civil rights. Kennedy hardly bothered to ask for the advice of the one American politician who had managed to get a civil-rights bill passed in the twentieth century (as Senate majority leader, in 1957, the climax of Caro’s previous book, “Master of the Senate”). But given the chance, on June 3, 1963, Johnson weighed in with the full passion and shrewdness of which he was capable.

First, tactically, he urged Kennedy to wait on a civil-rights bill, since the Southerners who controlled the key Senate committees would block every other Kennedy bill in order to defeat it. He explained how Kennedy could hold up other bills that every senator wanted—appropriations bills for dams and other public works—as he slowly built enough support for civil rights to defeat a filibuster. Johnson had to give Kennedy’s alter-ego, Ted Sorensen, a primer in the workings of the Senate, one that the Kennedy White House appeared to need badly. And in terms of the principle of civil rights, Johnson was clear. “I think that I know one thing,” he told Sorensen, according to Caro, “that the Negroes are tired of this patient stuff and tired of this piecemeal stuff and what they

want more than anything else is not an executive order or legislation, they want a moral commitment that he's behind them."

Sorensen assured the Vice-President that he would pass on his suggestions. A week later, Kennedy gave his civil-rights speech and used the same word that Johnson had used—"moral." How much direct influence Johnson might have had on the speech isn't clear, since, having allowed the Vice-President literally fifteen minutes of advice, Kennedy and his brother quickly returned to shutting out and undermining Johnson, and L.B.J. fell back into a deep depression. But one thing is clear: Johnson got there ahead of Kennedy. And he already had a strategy for how to get a bill through a seemingly intractable Congress—a strategy that Kennedy would ignore, leaving it to Johnson to follow his own advice in 1964.

For better and worse, the President Barack Obama most readily calls to mind is Kennedy. He has J.F.K.'s intellect, his detachment, his cool under pressure, his carefulness, his aversion to either-or thinking, his equivocations, his good looks. Like so many Americans, Obama has always characterized Kennedy in heroic terms, and in the 2008 campaign he seemed disinclined to acknowledge the contributions of Lyndon Johnson to American justice. His campaign got into a silly argument when Hillary Clinton alluded to Johnson's key role in passing civil rights, as if this obvious point were a slight against Martin Luther King, Jr. And at the convention in Denver, the nominee gave his acceptance speech on the forty-fifth anniversary of the March on Washington, an event that Obama rightly saluted—while neglecting to mention that the previous day, August 27th, had been the centennial of the birth of the greatest civil-rights President in the twentieth century.

If Obama identifies with Kennedy, it's worth wondering if BIDEN feels at all close to the ghost of L.B.J. Both men rose to power in the Senate by learning to master its byzantine ways. Both were defeated for the Presidential nomination by much younger, more glamorous senators whom they regarded as less than their equals, at least as colleagues in the Senate. Both suffered unflattering leaks and periodic scorn from members of the White House staff once they became Vice-President. Neither was considered a great friend of equal rights by those on the front lines of the issue of their day.

There are big differences, too. Obama seems to hold BIDEN in far higher regard than Kennedy did Johnson, in Caro's portrait. Johnson's Vice-Presidency nearly destroyed him; BIDEN'S has, for the most part, elevated him. And while Kennedy took very few risks in domestic policy until that speech on June 10, 1963, Obama gambled—and might have gambled away—his first term with a historic health-care bill that consumed his first year in office.

But it was Johnson who pushed hard on civil rights where Kennedy, assuming he'd get to it after his reëlection, hesitated. And it was BIDEN who, inadvertently, forced Obama to stop evolving and declare himself on an issue that the President clearly hoped would leave him alone until after November. Though same-sex marriage isn't a cause on the same scale of historic injustice as the color line in America, it is the issue that forces today's politicians to take a clear and politically difficult moral stand. It's an issue for politicians whose egos are not under tight rational control—who are, come heaven or hell, passionate.

Politico
Anti-violence bill clears House
By: Seung Min Kim / May 16, 2012
Defying a veto threat from the White House, the House approved its version of the Violence Against Women Act amid furious backlash from Democrats and women's groups that it wouldn't do enough to protect abused victims.

Wednesday's vote to renew the 1994 anti-violence law was 222-205. Twenty-three Republicans voted against the bill, while six Democrats voted for it. Vice President Joe BIDEN, who wrote the

law as a senator, said after the vote the measure would water down key protections for victims.

“I urge Congress to come together to pass a bipartisan measure that protects all victims,” BIDEN said in a statement. “VAWA has been improved each time it’s been reauthorized, and this time should be no different.”

But Republicans lashed out at Democrats for politicizing the debate over reauthorizing the law — which is normally widely bipartisan — and Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) blamed Senate Democrats for attempting to use VAWA as election-year campaign fodder.

“This is a victim-centered bill,” Rep. Sandy Adams (R-Fla.) told reporters Wednesday morning. “We want to make sure we are not politicizing this issue but just reauthorizing. If you look at the bill [and] what’s in it, you will see that it is centered around our victims.”

Adams, herself a victim of domestic violence, accused Democrats of concocting a “phony war on women” and said, “If you vote against this bill today, you will vote to deny help to millions of victims.”

The Violence Against Women Act was enacted in 1994 and renewed twice since. This year, Senate Democrats added a host of protections that would cover undocumented immigrants, same-sex partners and Native American women, and the bill passed the chamber 68-31 in late April. Democrats and the Obama administration want the House to pick up the Senate’s version of the bill.

Congressional Democrats argued that the Republicans’ Violence Against Women Act — which doesn’t include the Senate’s additions — would also weaken existing protections for domestic violence victims.

“As a member of this body and a survivor of sexual assault … I can tell you it’s traumatic to be here today and to find my colleagues not taking the recommended updates that people who work with domestic violence victims have put in front of them as best practices,” said Rep. Gwen Moore (D-Wis.).

Pennsylvania Rep. Patrick Meehan, one of the 23 Republicans to vote against the bill, said he opposed it because it wouldn’t do enough to combat assaults on college campus, among other concerns.

House Republicans made several changes Tuesday night to try and address concerns from women’s groups – particularly on the immigrant and the Native American provisions. But that wasn’t enough to appease its opponents.

“It doesn’t come within a country mile of being enough,” said Terry O’Neill, the president of the National Organization for Women, who said the House Republican’s version of the bill was “completely, 1,000 percent unacceptable.”

Huffington Post
House Passes Violence Against Women Act That Leaves Out LGBT, Immigrant Protections
By: Jennifer Bendery and Laura Bassett / May 16, 2012

WASHINGTON -- House Republicans on Wednesday passed their bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, despite protests from the White House, most Democrats and even some Republicans for not doing enough to protect LGBT, Native American and undocumented immigrant women.

The bill passed 221-205 on a largely partisan vote. Six Democrats voted for it and 23 Republicans

opposed it. Just two GOP congresswomen voted against it: Reps. Judy Biggert (Ill.) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (Fla.).

The House measure, like the Senate-passed bill, would reauthorize VAWA for another five years. But the Senate version is more comprehensive and House Democrats had been pressing for a vote on that bill instead, to no avail. VAWA is typically reauthorized with broad support and little debate, but in the context of a presidential election year and with the so-called "war on women" taking place, even an issue relating to violence against women has become a charged, partisan fight.

The White House threatened to veto the bill earlier this week, on the grounds that it "rolls back existing law and removes long-standing protections for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault." And just after the House vote, Vice President Joe BIDEN, an original sponsor of VAWA in 1994, issued a statement trashing the bill.

"The House has passed a version of the Violence Against Women Act that will roll back critical provisions to help victims of abuse. I urge Congress to come together to pass a bipartisan measure that protects all victims. VAWA has been improved each time it's been reauthorized, and this time should be no different," BIDEN said.

During the House debate, Democrats charged that the GOP bill would actually leave victims of domestic violence worse off than they are under current law. Unlike the Senate bill, the House proposal discourages undocumented immigrant women from reporting abuse without the threat of being deported. It also makes it harder for Native American women to seek justice against their abusers, and it leaves out protections for the LGBT community altogether.

Republicans "rarely miss an opportunity to exclude LGBT Americans from important rights and benefits," Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-Calif.) said. "They're saying if you're a woman in a relationship with another woman, then you don't deserve the same protections from domestic abuse or sexual assault."
"It's a shame that this so-called violence against women bill could actually cause violence to women," Rep. Susan Davis (D-Calif.) said. "This bill is outright dangerous."

Republicans maintained that their bill cracks down on fraud by making the grant process more accountable and that it honors criminal laws governing Native American reservations. Both the House and Senate bill authorize spending of about $660 million annually for grants to women's shelters and police training relating to domestic violence and sexual assault.

"Republican men and women both abhor violence against women," Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) said. "I would say that we are more concerned against violence against women ... we want to see the money spent better."

"If you vote against this bill today, you will vote to deny help to millions of victims ... in the name of political gamesmanship," said Rep. Sandy Adams (R-Fla.), the bill's sponsor.

But not all Republicans bought into that mindset. Biggert told The Huffington Post ahead of the vote that she planned to oppose the bill because "there were things that were left out" and because it wasn't put together in a bipartisan way.

"I've always worked on this, every time we've reauthorized it," said Biggert, a 14-year lawmaker. "We could have done so much better by doing a bipartisan bill. It's always been bipartisan."

Biggert said GOP leaders asked her to support the bill in an effort to have all of the Republican women backing it, but she said she declined because it left out protections for women in her district.

"I just said, 'I need to do the right thing.' They said they understood. It's who I represent," she said. "I think that the congresswomen had decided that they were going to do this ... as a women's bill. I'm sort of the odd man out."

The bill's passage came despite opposition from more than 320 advocacy groups, including faith-based groups, women's organizations, civil rights groups and domestic violence workers groups. During the debate, Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) pressed Adams to name groups that supported her bill.

"Well, Mr. Conyers, I can say I do," Adams said.

"I'm glad to know that," Conyers replied. "I think that just about tells everybody where the logic and the support for this bill is. There is none."

That isn't entirely correct, though: The National Coalition of Men endorsed the bill on Tuesday.

CNN
House passes GOP version of Violence Against Women Act renewal
By: Kate Bolduan / May 16, 2012

The House of Representatives passed the Republican version of the Violence Against Women Act on Wednesday, despite strong opposition from Democrats.

The GOP version, passed 222-205, offers a stark contrast from the bill passed by the Senate in late April, which will lead to further political fighting as both chambers attempt to work out a compromise over the law's reauthorization.

Wednesday's vote fell largely along party lines, though 23 Republicans voted against their own party and opposed the bill. Meanwhile, six Democrats defected and voted in favor of the Republican version.

The Violence Against Women Act was first enacted in 1994. It has been reauthorized twice since then with bipartisan support and very little controversy.

That's not the case this time around.

The Senate approved a bill last month with bipartisan support, voting 68-31 with every Republican woman supporting the measure. That version expands coverage to offer services to more illegal immigrants who are victims of domestic abuse. It also specifies that the law include gay, lesbian and transgender victims.

Human Rights Watch released a report Wednesday showing immigrant farmworkers are especially at risk for domestic abuse and argued provisions in the Senate bill -- not the House version -- "would go some way toward fixing the problem and should be enacted."

House Republicans oppose those changes, saying they are unnecessary because the law already covers all victims, and instead favor a narrower version of renewing the law.

Rep. Steny Hoyer of Maryland, the No. 2 House Democrat, opposed the GOP bill and has been calling for a vote on the Senate measure.

"All victims of domestic violence, irrespective of gender, ought to be protected," Hoyer said. "We believe the protection ought to be comprehensive, and we don't believe the Republicans' bill does that."

He joined a number of House Democrats who urged their colleagues to vote against the bill prior to the floor vote on Wednesday.

The White House late Tuesday threatened to veto the House GOP bill, in part because it "fails to include language that would prohibit discrimination against LGBT victims." The veto threat also says the GOP proposals "senselessly remove existing legal protections" and "jeopardize victims by placing them directly in harm's way."

"Today we are now debating something else that I never thought that we would be debating, which is whether or not all victims should be protected or just some," said Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Michigan, in a press conference Wednesday. "And we stand strongly together in saying that every single victim of domestic violence should have the law on their side.

Vice President Joe BIDEN reacted to Wednesday's vote by saying the House-passed version of the bill "will roll back critical provisions to help victims of abuse."

House Republican leaders, meanwhile, accused Democrats of creating a phony fight for political gain.

"This is another one of the Democrat gimmicks that goes on around here," House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, said at a recent news conference. "This is an important issue, but for our friends to be playing political games with this, frankly, is very inappropriate."

Sandy Adams, a first-term representative from Florida who rode the Republican wave in the 2010 midterm elections, agreed.

"I want to reauthorize it; I do not want to politicize it. The victims deserve better than that. Americans deserve better than that."

After the vote, Adams said, "Make no mistake about it; this is a victim-centered bill that is all inclusive. Just like past reauthorizations, the House-passed legislation is focused on all victims, without regard for race, ethnicity, sexual preference, or nationality.

House Republicans presented Adams as their new messenger this week in their fight to combat "The War on Women," one of the harshest election-year attack lines congressional Democrats have launched at Republicans. They accuse the GOP of waging this war on issues ranging from contraception to preventive health care coverage.

"I'm pretty sure I'm not at war with myself," said Adams.

She has maintained a relatively low profile during her time in Congress. But she stepped into the spotlight in a big way -- becoming the GOP face of the latest battle on Capitol Hill over the Violence Against Women Act, bringing her own story of domestic abuse with her.

"At an early age, I quit high school at 17 and joined the Air Force. Married by 18," Adams said. "During the marriage, I had a little girl, and I realized really soon that my husband had a penchant for drinking, and when he drank, he turned very mean, very violent."

She took her daughter and left. She later found work as a law enforcement officer before winning a seat in the Florida state House and eventually running for the U.S. House.

"I have experienced it both on a personal level and a law enforcement level," Adams said. "I know how this law has helped so many people in our country."

Her personal story may have helped Republicans push their version of the 18-year-old law and also help deflect the continued Democratic criticism that Republicans are insensitive toward

women.

While Adams condemns politics playing a role in this latest congressional standoff, being at the center of it doesn't help someone like her, who is facing some tough politics herself -- she is up against a much higher-profile fellow Republican, Rep. John Mica, in an upcoming primary in Florida.

Now that the House has passed the Republican version of the bill, it will need to reconcile differences with the Senate over its bill.

Both sides agree on the end goal: to renew the law. But in an election year, the lingering question is: How long will Congress drag out this fight?

Associated Press
House version of violence against women bill draws veto threat
By: Laurie Kellman / May 16, 2012

House Republicans set up a showdown Wednesday with the Senate and President Barack Obama over legislation to protect women from domestic violence, a fight that's become as much about female voters this election year as cracking down on abuse.
The House voted 222-205 to reauthorize the 1994 Violence Against Women Act for five years, as the Senate already had done. But big differences remain: Obama, other Democrats and a long list of advocacy groups say the House bill doesn't go far enough to protect abused immigrants, Native Americans or gays. Republicans say their bill does more to protect taxpayers from fraud and maintains the constitutionality of law enforcement procedures on Indian land.

It's unclear whether the differences will be reconciled before the November elections, or whether the bills will be used as campaign weapons.

But a pair of domestic violence survivors who fell on opposite sides of the debate reminded their House colleagues that for them and other abused women it's about far more than politics.

LOCAL PRINT COVERAGE

Youngstown Vindicator
BIDEN meets, thanks Salem firefighters
By: Larry Shields / May 17, 2012

Vice President Joe BIDEN got a little choked up when relating three personal episodes, two lifesaving, in which firefighters played a role in his life.
During an informal 35-minute visit with Salem firefighters on Wednesday, BIDEN recounted a car crash that took the life of his wife and 1-year-old daughter weeks after he was first elected to the U.S. Senate, crediting firefighters with saving his two sons with the "jaws of life."
He also recalled an aneurysm he suffered in 1988 and, unable to take a medical helicopter for fear of disturbing it, local firefighters ground-transported him to Walter Reed Hospital. He also mentioned a house fire in Delaware, crediting firefighters with saving the structure.
BIDEN appeared in Salem after a campaign speech at a Youngstown factory.
His motorcade drove through downtown Salem.
BIDEN was accompanied by former Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland who is considering a run in 2014 against the man who beat him in 2010 - Republican Gov. John Kasich.
BIDEN and Strickland shook hands with all of the firefighters with BIDEN giving each a vice presidential challenge coin with his handshake before speaking to the group.
The visit was interrupted twice when on-duty personnel responded to calls.
"I just came in to say 'hi and to say thank you.' You guys have been to hell and back" with local

budget cuts and increased demands, BIDEN said. He voiced his support for hiring more firefighters and supplying them with more equipment and praised them for filling myriad roles as first responders.
"Thank God you guys are so crazy, thank God it's in your DNA," BIDEN said. "You underestimate your impact."
The visit was arranged by the International Association of Firefighters, which strictly limited it to Local 283 firefighters only.
Former Local 283 President Ken Vernon said, "They were coming here for 283 and that was that. The Secret Service told us who could be here" and specified "no wives or family."
BIDEN himself said he wanted to meet just with the firefighters, Fire Chief Jeff Hughes said.
Mayor John Berlin could not see BIDEN but requested a gold city lapel pin and business card he gave to a Secret Service agent be presented to BIDEN.
"He's the second-most powerful man in the world," Berlin said.
"We may differ on the issues but this is our government in action. In our world you have to put these things aside when he comes to your town."
Capt. Shawn Mesler said Strickland was aware of and personally thanked firefighters for their battle during the fire district days.
After the meeting, BIDEN greeted children on the South Ellsworth Avenue driveway, standing for photos, holding babies, shaking hands and signing autographs.
Eighteen-year-old Salem High School senior Meg Bell scored a triple when she took some upclose photos of BIDEN, had her picture taken with him and got his autograph on her cell phone - "Meg, Joe BIDEN, 5-16-12."
Bell, who attended on the spur of the moment with her mother, Julie Bell, said, "I'm speechless pretty much. I'm a fan of Obama ... and BIDEN, of course. I've never met anyone famous before.
"He was so personable, nothing fake about him, he was shaking hands with all of us older kids," Bell said, adding the cover of her cell phone will be removed for a keepsake.
"I honestly thought it was nicer than I thought it would be," she said.
Her mother was glad both of her kids have seen sitting vice presidents in person. Her son, Josh, saw Dan Quayle in 1992 when her son was 5, she said.
Salem seventh-grader Joey Barcey, 14, shook hands with BIDEN and "got some pictures of him."
"It was pretty nice. He treats kids with respect. I'm glad I met him and am honored," Barcey said.
After BIDEN departed, Hughes, who acknowledged he was a little nervous at first, said, "Was that fun or what?"
He was surprised when BIDEN entered the building.
"I expected to see people come in ahead of him ... instead he just blew in and said, 'How ya doing?'"
Vernon was also surprised, thinking the atmosphere would have been more formal.
Lt. Rod Hughes had seen President Reagan when he was in the Navy and Obama before he became president. BIDEN was the third top-ranking statesmen he'd seen in person.
"He's a personable individual," Hughes said.
Inspector Aaron Loper said it was a rare opportunity to speak candidly with BIDEN.
BIDEN also mentioned the Obama administration's failed American Jobs Act, which included money to rehire 450,000 firefighters, police officers and teachers by raising taxes on people who earn at least $1 million per year.
"We said there's an easy way to pay for it and we thought everybody'd go along," BIDEN said.
The Salem Fire Department was awarded a FEMA grant last year of more than $300,000 to maintain staffing levels through 2013, according to the Obama campaign. The department was awarded more than $46,000 this year to replace a worn-out air compressor.

Youngstown Vindicator
BIDEN makes city stops
By: Dave Gossett / May 17, 2012

Vice President Joe BIDEN took time out Wednesday from a two-day campaign swing in Eastern Ohio to enjoy a chicken parmesan dinner at Naples Spaghetti House and buy ice cream for his

staff.
He also had time to shake hands and pose for photographs when he visited the Joe Staffilino Sr. home in the city's West End.
BIDEN arrived late Wednesday afternoon and met the Staffilino family and former Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland at Naples, where he spent nearly two hours greeting dinner customers.
"I have heard a lot about this restaurant from Ted Strickland. I love Italian food and I'm hungry,' BIDEN told co-owners Susan, Tim and Lisa Delatore.
"We are honored to have you here," replied Susan Delatore.
The Staffilino family at the restaurant included Joe Staffilino Sr., president of Staffilino Chevrolet in Martins Ferry; Donna Marie Staffilino, wife of Joe Sr.; Joe Staffilino Jr., general manager of Staffilino Chevrolet; Angela Lee Kessler Staffilino, wife of Joe Jr.; Anthony Staffilino, Joe Jr.'s son; and Cassie Wamsley, Joe Jr.'s stepdaughter.
BIDEN was set to be at the Staffilino Chevrolet dealership in Martins Ferry at 10:15 a.m. today, where he was set to deliver remarks on the Obama's administration work on the auto industry rescue bailout.
Earlier Wednesday, BIDEN campaigned at a Youngstown factory where he called Republican challenger Mitt Romney a corporate raider.
The BIDEN campaign caravan traveled to Joe Staffilino Sr.'s residence, where the vice president spent approximately 35 minutes before emerging to greet neighbors and pose for photographs in their front yard across the street.
His last stop was at the Hollywood City Center Dairy Queen, where BIDEN bought ice cream cones and milk shakes for campaign staff members and two local residents who weren't expecting to meet the vice president.
Chris and Dianne Murphy had stopped at the Hollywood City Center Dairy Queen for late-evening ice cream cones to celebrate their daughter Bailie's softball game victory earlier in the afternoon.
That's when BIDEN, accompanied by local reporters and photographers, members of the national press corps, campaign staff and Secret Service agents walked through the front door.
"I was pretty surprised to see him walk in like that. My daughter had played a softball game at Beaver Local and we ran into traffic on state Route 7 coming home. We had heard Vice President BIDEN was coming to the city, but never expected to see him in the Dairy Queen," said Chris Murphy.
BIDEN enjoyed a chocolate-coated vanilla swirl ice cream cone and started asking people around him if they wanted ice cream.
He soon spotted Christopher and Bailie Murphy.
"Do you play football?" BIDEN asked the younger Christopher.
"Yes sir," Christopher replied.
"I played when I was in school. Where do you play at?" BIDEN continued.
"Catholic Central High School," replied Murphy.
"How about some ice cream?" BIDEN asked Christopher and his sister, Bailie.
"If I knew you were coming, I would have waited for you to buy me ice cream," called out an unidentified woman in the Dairy Queen.
BIDEN bought ice cream cones and milk shakes for several staff members and Jefferson County Sheriff Fred Abdalla before leaving the business shortly before closing time.
"It was a little nerve-wracking when all those people started coming in. And then we saw Vice President BIDEN and it was even more nerve wracking. But he was very nice and we got all the orders taken care of," said Dairy Queen clerk Josie Goodwin.

TELEVISION COVERAGE

MSNBC
Morning Joe Package on VP Joe BIDEN w/ Joe Scarbourough, Mika Brzenzinksi, Willie Geist, Jim Cramer, Mike Barnacle
May 17, 2012

MIKA: back with us on set we have jim cramer and mike barnacle.

JOE: you know, i would say the populist stuff doesn't work because it always seems so phony. but BIDEN, BIDEN is telling the truth. it works for BIDEN, because he feels it. working class guy. he feels it and, by the way, you look at all of these millionaires that run our country and then you look at his -- you know, his taxes every year, he's -- you know, he hasn't cashed in.

BARNACLE: he feels it, he understands it, he lives it, he's vice president of the united states, he has secret service protection but he's still joe BIDEN. part of him is still joe BIDEN from scranton, pennsylvania. we keep hearing ripples that there is a little animosity or anger towards the vice president on the gay stuff

MIKA: oh, no, i can't believe it. not for a second.

BARNACLE: for forcing the president's hand. but he is a valuable asset to this president.

MIKA: he's the best thing they got when it comes to politics. i'm sorry, he knows exactly what he's doing.

>> he gets it. and mika, boy, he went after them.

MIKA: let's show more of that fiery speech at a youngstown manufacturing plant yesterday. the vice president addressed the challenges facing the middle class while taking aim at mitt romney for his tenure at the investment firm bain capital.

BIDEN: this election is going to be a choice between two fundamentally different philosophies, and that choice is about whether or not we're going to rebuild the middle class or continue to help those at the very top and hope everything works out well. romney made sure the guys on top got to play by a separate set of rules. he ran up massive debts in the middle class laws. and, folks, he thinks that experience is going to help our economy? let's take a look. look, with these guys past is prologue, man. so i want you to think about what he'll do as president.

BIDEN: he's a patriot. he's a generous man. he gives to his church. he has a beautiful family. but he doesn't get it. he doesn't get what's at the core of all this. it's about people's dignity.

JOE: you know, i say populism doesn't work. it works. there are two things, he doesn't get it, which republicans always trail democrats in that. does such and such understand your problems, your family's problems. but there's another thing, jim. and this is really a message and it's the first time i've really heard anybody deliver it that well. if every democrat could deliver it that well, then the last four or five years could be used for their advantage, even next year. and that is, he thinks his rich friends should play by a different set of rules. because the american dream -- i was talking about my dad. my dad worked hard, he was unemployed for a year and a half. there was never any resentment, but he expected everybody, whether it was the kennedys or the people next door to play by the same damn set of rules that he had to play by. that's a pretty powerful message.

CRAMER: i thought it was. i remember riding down on the train when he was still a senator. he always took the train. he said to me i'm the poorest guy in the senate. 100 senators and i have the least amount of money. but has equal power. it reminds me exactly of what he's saying. now, the 1% in this country, i've said this on "mad money," it’s not a problem to say it, doesn't play by the same rules. the reason why, they pay far less tax. now, the 15% tax that romney pays, it should be an issue again because i was a hedge fund manager. i didn't pay this. i just thoughtt was wrong to be able to convert your ordinary income into capital gains is strictly something you can do if you're real rich. no one else can do it because they can't get away with it. just wrong.

JOE: We have a friend that kept talking to us about, oh, you should do this, you should do that. talking about buy a small plane a couple years ago. and then took out a balance sheet and he explained with all the tax breaks and everything else that if you paid a certain amount, at the end

through 100% depreciation and tax deductions and your business, he showed in a very like complicated way how after four or five years it was free. and you know what, he was right! but my dad needed to buy a buick in 1973 or somebody in youngstown, ohio, today trying to get by, the rules aren't skewed that way for them. there's one rule after another rule after another rule that seems to skew for the rich.

CRAMER: the rich have power to be able to influence the laws. the rich are without a doubt the most clever about the tax code. remember the law says very clear. as long as you don't evade taxes, it's your perfect right to avoid taxes. that's always been the case. but who has enough money to be able to hire a lawyer to look through the code and avoid taxes. only rich people.

JOE: people talk about taxing the rich. don't tax the businessperson that makes $250,000 to $400,000, don't raise their taxes because they can't afford the accountants and the tax lawyers to make sure that their small business continues to grow and continues to hire people.

MIKA: The romney campaign, by the way, responded to what the vice president was saying and the attacks on the former governor's career at bain capital saying, quote, 'president obama can't come close to matching the many years of experience that mitt romney has as a private businessman, so he has chosen to attack the free market. millions across this country are struggling and deserve a leader who understands how the economy works.' and that would be the political counter message, which is. mitt romney understands the economy?

JOE: Again, though, he does it for some reason that message works with barack obama. like a guy who is a law professor and everything. so if he says that about barack obama, okay, you're right, you're right. but when joe BIDEN says -- and it shouldn't be the case because you look at barack obama and his grandparents raised him in hawaii, very middle class upbringing. but for some reason BIDEN, like when BIDEN says my parents believed i could be president of the united states or i could be a millionaire, you know he's telling the truth. so that brush back about being anti-capitalism doesn't work against BIDEN as well.

BARNACLE: No. The vice president of the united states, Joe BIDEN, has a picture in his head. he can see the house on top of the hill where the rich people live in the town that he grew up in, and he knows instinctively that the people who live at the bottom of the hill, the BIDENs, the Scarboroughs when we were younger know they don't represent the people on the bottom of the hill. but there's a connection and it's called trust between the rich people at the top of the hill and the people at the bottom of the hill. the people at the bottom of the hill believe they can get up there to the top of the hill but once that line of trust is broken like with the banks, with the breaks that the rich get, once that line of trust is broken, then you've got a problem and that's where Joe BIDEN can really say it.

JOE: Which again, is the reason why Joe BIDEN'S message works. And there's not that resentment. i told the story after my dad died when we were in mississippi, we'd drive past country club drive and look at all the big houses and look at the golf course. if i stepped foot on it, they'd probably shoot me in the back of the head. they probably still would. but my parents said look at those houses, look at those big houses. you keep working hard, you do well in school, you'll be able to live in one of those houses. and i promise you, being a doctor or a lawyer in 1971-72 when my dad was unemployed and we were driving by that, that was about as far removed from my existence as being, you know, premier of china. but my parents were like work hard, do it, you can live there.

GEIST: and when joe BIDEN gets it going in a setting like that, and you talk about political athletes, purely political, he's throwing his arms around guys, he's giving them the business, he's whispering.

MIKA: it's genuine, though.

GEIST: no, i'm saying he really pulls it off.

MIKA: he's a connecter.

GEIST: if we agree that a small group of swing voters maybe in ohio, maybe in florida will decide who the next president of the united states is, that's pretty effective right there.

MSNBC
Rachel Maddow on VAWA
May 16, 2012

MADDOW: it is a special visa program under the violence against women act. republicans in Washington are right to roll that back. the violence against women act was first passed almost 20 years ago. when he was in the senate, vice president joe BIDEN wrote the original bill. it passed with bipartisan support. the act was reauthorized in the year 2000, reauthorized again in 2005. it has never been a particularly controversial thing, until now. republicans in the senate initially voted it down this year on a party line vote. they gave it zero votes in committee. it finally did pass the full senate on a 68-31 vote. all 31 no votes there were all male republican senators. all the republican women in the senate voted for it, but 31 men voted no. but now it's over in the house. and house republicans are not for it. they introduced a republican counterproposal that undoes big portions of the violence against women act. their changes, for example, would take away the anonymity from their special visa program for beaten women, thereby advancing the important public policy goal of alerting the abusive husbands of mail order brides if the woman they're beating is trying to get away there them. why has the violence against women act turned into this? why have the politics around this issue turned so much this year? after being such a such a non-controversial thing for decades. it's because the right wing of the right wing decided this year they're going to make an issue out of it. this is a letter signed by the family research council, by the eagle forum, by liberty council, which is affiliated with the jerry folwell university, also the traditional values coalition. this is them writing to congress to say, don't reauthorize if violence against women act. one of the signatories to this letter is a former vice chair of the North Carolina republican party, who himself has a felony domestic violence conviction on his record. he got a suspended sentence of 18 months in prison after admitting to beating his wife into the hospital, breaking her nose, breaking her toes, breaking a piece of furniture over her back. police found his wife in the couple's home on Christmas day, bleeding from the face and suffering from other injuries. he pled guilty to felony aggravated assault in that case. he is now one of the signatories to the vote against the violence against women act letter, right? it's a letter signed by him and by all those groups that have the word "values" in their names. one of the other signatories in this coalition that seems to have persuaded republicans to be against the violence against women act this year is a group called s.a.v.e., a group based in Rockville, Maryland. they have been lobbying house republicans to oppose the violence against women act this year. they've been lobbying specifically to roll back some of the protections for immigrant women. the treasurer of that group, s.a.v.e., that's lobbying to get rid of the advisory rule that would help mail order brides, one of the treasurers of that group is the founder of this thing that everybody thought was porn on my website all day today. the russian mail order bride company. which again promises that these women will follow their husband's lead and stick with the marriage, even when times get tough. and just think how much tougher you can make those times if she knows that not sticking with the marriage means she gets deported back to russia. so, yeah, the whole republicans have a war on women thing, this is the sort of thing that has given rise to that sentiment, that republicans have a war on women. this is how you earn a political epithet like that. for what it's earth, democrats have been fighting like heck on this issue. president Obama has personally brought this issue up multiple times in recent weeks. the president all but promising to veto the republican's rollback of the violence against women a act, which passed the house today. vice president BIDEN has brought the issue up multiple times. he, of course, wrote the first violence against women act. one of the president's top advisers, Valerie Jarrett, has an op-ed out on issue today. Nancy Pelosi has been front paging this issue in her position as the democrat's leader in the house. and today at a press conference on

capitol hill, a Wisconsin democratic congresswoman named Gwen Moore went all out, not just on the legislation, but on what in her personal experience has convinced her that the violence against women act is so important.

[CLIP]
MOORE: you know, one experience that i had to occurred to me, i thought of this morning was a time when i took a ride with a guy i thought was a friend to go get some fried chicken. and he decided to take a detour behind some buildings to rape me and choke me almost to death. i was sort of seeing that little light that you often hear about. as a woman of color, i am particularly aggrieved that this bill ignores the special circumstances of women who are minorities. women who are in the shadows. stop playing games with the lives of women! this is yet another -- they don't want to hear us talk about it being a war on women, but this is a direct assault on women's lives. three women a day die from victimization. and i would implore my colleagues to stop playing games.
[END CLIP]

MADDOW: the house voted on and passed the republican rollback of the violence against women act today. passed it on a nearly party line vote. so that was today in this crazy war on women idea that has no basis in reality. you want to know what republicans are going to do tomorrow to earn that epithet all over again? ...

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN

PRESS RECAP

MAY 18, 2012

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NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PRINT COVERAGE

Politico

BIDEN: 'How about some ice cream?'
By: Byron Tau / May 16, 2012

Vice President Joe **BIDEN** surprised patrons at an Ohio Dairy Queen with an unannounced visit Wednesday night.

On a two-day campaign swing through the Buckeye state, **BIDEN** stopped in the Hollywood City Center Dairy Queen in Steubenville, Ohio for a cone.

Locals Chris and Diane Murphy, stopping at the shop after their daughter's softball game, were surprised by the vice president's unexpected arrival.

"My daughter had played a softball game at Beaver Local and we ran into traffic on state Route 7 coming home. We had heard Vice President **BIDEN** was coming to the city but never expected to see him walk into Dairy Queen," Chris Murphy told reporters traveling with the vice president.

BIDEN spotted the Murphy children and offered to buy them ice cream after some banter.

"Do you play football?" **BIDEN** asked one of them. "I played when I was in school. Where do you play at?"

"Catholic Central High School," he replied.

"How about some ice cream?" **BIDEN** then asked.

"If I knew you were coming I would have waited for you to buy me ice cream," another patron shouted.

BIDEN bought several cones and milkshakes before departing a few minutes later.

CNN

BIDEN'S campaign trail goes where Obama's won't
By: Paul Steinhauser / May 16, 2012

Vice President Joe **BIDEN** kicks off a two-day swing Wednesday through the eastern edge of the must-win battleground state of Ohio, an area that President Barack Obama is unlikely to visit this election year.

And while the vice president apologized to the president last week for seemingly jumping the gun on the issue of same-sex marriage, this trip is an illustration of just how valuable **BIDEN** is for Obama as he bids for a second term in the White House.

"As much as political insiders joke about Joe **BIDEN**, he's indispensable to the Obama ticket," says Republican strategist and CNN contributor Alex Castellanos.

According to the Obama re-election campaign, the vice president will travel to Ohio's Mahoning and Ohio valleys "to highlight the impact of President Obama's efforts to strengthen the region's manufacturing and auto industries, as well as bolster middle-class security for Ohio's workers."

The campaign says **BIDEN** will speak at an advanced manufacturing facility in Youngstown and at a Chevrolet dealership in Martins Ferry.

The general manger of the dealership, Joe Staffilino II, says he's "really surprised" that the vice president is dropping by and that people in the area "are real excited about the visit."

It's not an area friendly to Obama, said Paul Beck, professor of political science at The Ohio State University.

"These are areas of traditional Democratic strength, steel working areas, areas with a lot of working class Democrats from the old days. President Obama has not played well there," Beck explained.

Obama was soundly defeated by then-Sen. Hillary Clinton in southeast and eastern Ohio in the Democratic presidential primary in March 2008, and

while he won the state by five points over Sen. John McCain in the general election that November, he didn't perform as well in the eastern edge of the state.

"Part of the problem is that these tend to be more conservative Democrats. For some of them his race may be an issue, probably not among the younger ones but among some of the older voters. These tend to be depressed areas, with a lot of job loss over the past couple of decades. There are deeply entrenched pockets of unemployment and economic distress," Beck added.

BIDEN grew up in Scranton, in neighboring Pennsylvania, an area that's also witnessed tough times in the past few decades.

"These are places where I think Joe **BIDEN** has particular appeal, as a kind of traditional Democrat of the old school. He comes from a part of Pennsylvania that's very much like the eastern part of Ohio. I think he can really connect with voters there in a way which President Obama cannot," Beck said.

The president's been to Ohio 21 times since taking office. But only two of those trips took him through the state's eastern edge.

But it's not just Obama -- presumptive Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney was edged out by former Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania in much of the region in the March GOP primary. Santorum gave his primary night speech in the Ohio River valley city of Steubenville.

Beck predicted that Romney will likely not "be able to connect with (eastern Ohio voters) well either" ahead of the November election.

Which is why **BIDEN** may come in so handy in blue-collar areas in eastern Ohio, western and central Pennsylvania, and in parts of Michigan.

"His working-class honesty cuts through all the political bull in Washington. He grounds Obama in the real world. In blue-collar swing states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan, Joe **BIDEN** is a tremendous asset to Obama who, at times, makes voters feel like he is president of the elite, for the elite, and by the elite," added Castellanos, who was a top media adviser for

Romney's 2008 nomination bid, but who stayed neutral in this year's battle for the GOP nomination.

Democratic strategist and CNN contributor Paul Begala agrees.

"Unlike Mitt Romney, Joe **BIDEN** can talk to middle-class people without an interpreter. Even though he's traveled the globe and is one of the most powerful people in the world, he's still Joe -- a middle-class guy from Scranton.

"**BIDEN'S** ability to connect with working families is one of the Obama campaign's greatest assets. I bet they'll be seeing a lot of him in the next six months," said Begala, who was a top adviser in the Clinton White House and who now is a senior adviser to Priorities USA, the pro-Obama super PAC.

But some Republicans disagree about **BIDEN'S** value to the Democratic ticket. "It speaks to President Obama's vulnerability that the campaign has to rely on Vice President **BIDEN** to campaign in key states like Ohio because Obama can't identify with voters. Between his infamous gaffes and his liberal positions on the free market and our nation's debt, having **BIDEN** on the stump carries its own set of risks," Republican National Committee press secretary Kirsten Kukowski told CNN.

BIDEN'S been in the spotlight recently for his comments a week and a half ago on NBC's "Meet the Press," that he was "absolutely comfortable" with legal same-sex marriages, a position that the president had yet to take. Obama was forced to speed up his timetable on the issue and come out with his own comments approving the unions three days later.

Some political pundits said that **BIDEN** was a liability to the president, while others pointed to the argument that running mates rarely matter in the race for the White House.

"Sure, people vote for the top of the ticket, but this election will likely turn on who can build an economy for the middle class," Begala said. "If that's the question, **BIDEN** is a big part of the answer."

"If I were **BIDEN**, I would keep Obama on my ticket," Castellanos said.

Politico
Joe BIDEN'S map
By: CHARLES MAHTESIAN / May 16, 2012

Previewing Vice President Joe **BIDEN'S** two-day Ohio swing, CNN's Political Ticker takes note of **BIDEN'S** map — and how he's able to connect with white, working-class voters in a way that President Barack Obama hasn't been able to.

For all the chatter about his gaffe-prone ways, **BIDEN'S** old-school campaign trail style and Rust Belt roots make him a asset with blue-collar voters in places like Ohio and Pennsylvania.

From Paul Steinhauser's report:

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younger ones but among some of the older voters. These tend to be depressed areas, with a lot of job loss over the past couple of decades. There are deeply entrenched pockets of unemployment and economic distress," Beck added.

Huffington Post

Joe BIDEN'S Good Moves

By: Robert Hoopes, President, VOX Global / May 17, 2012

Vice President Joe **BIDEN** is spending some time in the Ohio Valley and in the process reminding voters, the Romney campaign and folks in the West Wing that he will be a formidable force in this year's presidential campaign. **BIDEN** connects with key voters who are critical to winning this year's election.

In Youngstown, Ohio, the vice president delivered a widely covered speech that, as much as any event in this campaign to date, set up the choice in November. Elections are about choices and **BIDEN** artfully drew the line for these key voters when he told them:

More than any other candidate on the ticket in November (we will see who Mitt Romney picks as his running mate), **BIDEN'S** down-to-earth, regular guy persona stands out and resonates with voters. And it stands in sharp contrast to Romney's personal and professional narrative. Ironically, Romney has been remarkably silent on his personal narrative, faith and private life, choosing instead to put his "Mr. Fix It" financial persona front and center for voters. The idea of the head of Bain Capital as the head of government won't sit well with these swing voters. Harry Truman was "Mr. Fix It"; Mitt Romney is "Mr. Pull it Apart, Sell the Pieces and Make Money at the Expense of the Worker."

Ironically for Romney, working class Americans are not opposed to wealthy presidents. To the contrary. The two wealthiest men to serve in the White House were our first and third presidents, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Among the modern presidency, Presidents Johnson, Hoover, Roosevelt, Clinton and Kennedy comprise the sixth through tenth wealthiest presidents. Among this list is only a single Republican. Democrats and swing voters do vote for the 1 percent. But the "Romney rich" just doesn't feel right to so many voters, and **BIDEN** has tapped into that source of discomfort: "They don't get us! They don't get who we are".

Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Roosevelt had a common touch with the common man (though the common woman has now also become critical). Romney's touch is rehearsed and awkward, and for most voters, the only

time they will touch a $2,000 suit is when they slap Mitt Romney on the back. Romney's list of phony common touch assertions range from immigration gaffes, betting Governor Perry $10,000, and claiming he knows what it's like to be out of work. Check the top 10 list from Rolling Stone here.

As **BIDEN** demonstrated in Ohio, his touch is genuine and natural.

To prove his point, **BIDEN** hit a DQ for some ice cream for him and his staff after a spaghetti dinner Wednesday night. Think Romney ever took the Bain team to DQ after raiding and dismantling many of their corporate acquisitions? No; they likely went to Morton's and ate with the 1 percent.

NATIONAL OTHER PRINT COVERAGE

The New Yorker
L.B.J.'s BIDEN Moment
By: George Packer / May 15, 2012

In one of those coincidences that get you thinking in historical analogies, President Obama announced his support for same-sex marriage just a few days after the publication of Robert Caro's fourth volume on the life of Lyndon B. Johnson, "The Passage of Power." Obama arrived at his position in very much the way that John F. Kennedy decided to put the force of the White House behind civil rights: slowly, reluctantly, and with a big assist from his overlooked, often ridiculed Vice-President.

I spent the summer of 1980 as an intern at a legal-aid office in southern Alabama, and in the houses of poor black people I got used to seeing a sign on the wall that said, "The three who set us free," beneath pictures of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. It always struck me as unfair that Johnson had been erased from history, not just in those homes in Alabama, but in the judgment of liberal-minded Americans all over the country. After all, it was President Johnson who got civil rights and voting rights passed, along with the entire program of social-justice legislation known as the Great Society.

For their part, President Kennedy and his brother, the attorney general, spent their first two and a half years in office doing everything possible to avoid taking a position on the central moral issue of their time. The Freedom Rides, sit-ins, James Meredith, Albany, Georgia, Birmingham, and Bull Connor—time after time, the Kennedys watched Americans risking and giving their lives for basic rights and refused to take a clear side. Instead, the President urged patience and talked about enforcing laws and court orders, as if it were a purely legal question. In May, 1963, in the midst of police violence and massive arrests of schoolchildren in Birmingham, Kennedy was asked by a reporter whether it would be useful to speak to the country on the issue.

"Well, it might. If I thought it would I would give one," was his non-committal answer. The next day, Erwin Griswold, a member of Kennedy's civil-rights commission, said, "It seems clear to me that he hasn't even started to use

the powers that are available to him." According to Richard Reeves's "President Kennedy: Profile of Power," Kennedy privately fumed, "That son-of-a-bitch! Let him try." Compared with his attitude toward the unfolding Buddhist crisis in Saigon that same month, "The President seemed more detached about the events in Birmingham," Reeves wrote. " 'Life is unfair,' he had said many times. His sense of irony and his wit kept him out of corners where he might have to choose between right and wrong."

A month later, on June 10th, after another crisis—Governor George Wallace blocking the door to the University of Alabama—Kennedy finally gave the speech, on national television, from the Oval Office. It was one of the best and most important of his Presidency. "This is not a sectional issue," he told the country.

Nor is this a partisan issue…This is not even a legal or legislative issue alone…We are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is as old as the Scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution.
From then on, there was little doubt that the President of the United States stood with the marchers, and not the police—although Kennedy was unable to get his civil-rights bill through Congress and left it to his successor to succeed where he had not.

History remembers that much, even if most Americans forget. But what the great Robert Caro has revealed is the role L.B.J. played in civil rights during the Kennedy years. Ignored and humiliated by both brothers, convinced that his political life—that is, his whole life—was over, Johnson only showed signs of his old vitality when it came to civil rights. Kennedy hardly bothered to ask for the advice of the one American politician who had managed to get a civil-rights bill passed in the twentieth century (as Senate majority leader, in 1957, the climax of Caro's previous book, "Master of the Senate"). But given the chance, on June 3, 1963, Johnson weighed in with the full passion and shrewdness of which he was capable.

First, tactically, he urged Kennedy to wait on a civil-rights bill, since the Southerners who controlled the key Senate committees would block every other Kennedy bill in order to defeat it. He explained how Kennedy could hold up other bills that every senator wanted—appropriations bills for dams and other public works—as he slowly built enough support for civil rights to defeat a filibuster. Johnson had to give Kennedy's alter-ego, Ted Sorensen, a primer in the workings of the Senate, one that the Kennedy

White House appeared to need badly. And in terms of the principle of civil rights, Johnson was clear. “I think that I know one thing,” he told Sorensen, according to Caro, “that the Negroes are tired of this patient stuff and tired of this piecemeal stuff and what they want more than anything else is not an executive order or legislation, they want a moral commitment that he’s behind them.”

Sorensen assured the Vice-President that he would pass on his suggestions. A week later, Kennedy gave his civil-rights speech and used the same word that Johnson had used—“moral.” How much direct influence Johnson might have had on the speech isn’t clear, since, having allowed the Vice-President literally fifteen minutes of advice, Kennedy and his brother quickly returned to shutting out and undermining Johnson, and L.B.J. fell back into a deep depression. But one thing is clear: Johnson got there ahead of Kennedy. And he already had a strategy for how to get a bill through a seemingly intractable Congress—a strategy that Kennedy would ignore, leaving it to Johnson to follow his own advice in 1964.

For better and worse, the President Barack Obama most readily calls to mind is Kennedy. He has J.F.K.’s intellect, his detachment, his cool under pressure, his carefulness, his aversion to either-or thinking, his equivocations, his good looks. Like so many Americans, Obama has always characterized Kennedy in heroic terms, and in the 2008 campaign he seemed disinclined to acknowledge the contributions of Lyndon Johnson to American justice. His campaign got into a silly argument when Hillary Clinton alluded to Johnson’s key role in passing civil rights, as if this obvious point were a slight against Martin Luther King, Jr. And at the convention in Denver, the nominee gave his acceptance speech on the forty-fifth anniversary of the March on Washington, an event that Obama rightly saluted—while neglecting to mention that the previous day, August 27th, had been the centennial of the birth of the greatest civil-rights President in the twentieth century.

If Obama identifies with Kennedy, it’s worth wondering if **BIDEN** feels at all close to the ghost of L.B.J. Both men rose to power in the Senate by learning to master its byzantine ways. Both were defeated for the Presidential nomination by much younger, more glamorous senators whom they regarded as less than their equals, at least as colleagues in the Senate. Both suffered unflattering leaks and periodic scorn from members of the White House staff once they became Vice-President. Neither was

considered a great friend of equal rights by those on the front lines of the issue of their day.

There are big differences, too. Obama seems to hold **BIDEN** in far higher regard than Kennedy did Johnson, in Caro's portrait. Johnson's Vice-Presidency nearly destroyed him; **BIDEN'S** has, for the most part, elevated him. And while Kennedy took very few risks in domestic policy until that speech on June 10, 1963, Obama gambled—and might have gambled away—his first term with a historic health-care bill that consumed his first year in office.

But it was Johnson who pushed hard on civil rights where Kennedy, assuming he'd get to it after his reëlection, hesitated. And it was **BIDEN** who, inadvertently, forced Obama to stop evolving and declare himself on an issue that the President clearly hoped would leave him alone until after November. Though same-sex marriage isn't a cause on the same scale of historic injustice as the color line in America, it is the issue that forces today's politicians to take a clear and politically difficult moral stand. It's an issue for politicians whose egos are not under tight rational control—who are, come heaven or hell, passionate.

Politico

Anti-violence bill clears House

By: Seung Min Kim / May 16, 2012

Defying a veto threat from the White House, the House approved its version of the Violence Against Women Act amid furious backlash from Democrats and women's groups that it wouldn't do enough to protect abused victims.

Wednesday's vote to renew the 1994 anti-violence law was 222-205. Twenty-three Republicans voted against the bill, while six Democrats voted for it. Vice President Joe **BIDEN**, who wrote the law as a senator, said after the vote the measure would water down key protections for victims.

"I urge Congress to come together to pass a bipartisan measure that protects all victims," **BIDEN** said in a statement. "VAWA has been improved each time it's been reauthorized, and this time should be no different."

But Republicans lashed out at Democrats for politicizing the debate over reauthorizing the law — which is normally widely bipartisan — and Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) blamed Senate Democrats for attempting to use VAWA as election-year campaign fodder.

"This is a victim-centered bill," Rep. Sandy Adams (R-Fla.) told reporters Wednesday morning. "We want to make sure we are not politicizing this issue but just reauthorizing. If you look at the bill [and] what's in it, you will see that it is centered around our victims."

Adams, herself a victim of domestic violence, accused Democrats of concocting a "phony war on women" and said, "If you vote against this bill today, you will vote to deny help to millions of victims."

The Violence Against Women Act was enacted in 1994 and renewed twice since. This year, Senate Democrats added a host of protections that would cover undocumented immigrants, same-sex partners and Native American women, and the bill passed the chamber 68-31 in late April. Democrats and the Obama administration want the House to pick up the Senate's version of the bill.

Congressional Democrats argued that the Republicans' Violence Against Women Act — which doesn't include the Senate's additions — would also weaken existing protections for domestic violence victims.

"As a member of this body and a survivor of sexual assault … I can tell you it's traumatic to be here today and to find my colleagues not taking the recommended updates that people who work with domestic violence victims have put in front of them as best practices," said Rep. Gwen Moore (D-Wis.).

Pennsylvania Rep. Patrick Meehan, one of the 23 Republicans to vote against the bill, said he opposed it because it wouldn't do enough to combat assaults on college campus, among other concerns.

House Republicans made several changes Tuesday night to try and address concerns from women's groups – particularly on the immigrant and the Native American provisions. But that wasn't enough to appease its opponents.

"It doesn't come within a country mile of being enough," said Terry O'Neill, the president of the National Organization for Women, who said the House Republican's version of the bill was "completely, 1,000 percent unacceptable."

Huffington Post

House Passes Violence Against Women Act That Leaves Out LGBT, Immigrant Protections

By: Jennifer Bendery and Laura Bassett / May 16, 2012

WASHINGTON -- House Republicans on Wednesday passed their bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, despite protests from the White House, most Democrats and even some Republicans for not doing enough to protect LGBT, Native American and undocumented immigrant women.

The bill passed 221-205 on a largely partisan vote. Six Democrats voted for it and 23 Republicans opposed it. Just two GOP congresswomen voted against it: Reps. Judy Biggert (Ill.) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (Fla.).

The House measure, like the Senate-passed bill, would reauthorize VAWA for another five years. But the Senate version is more comprehensive and House Democrats had been pressing for a vote on that bill instead, to no avail. VAWA is typically reauthorized with broad support and little debate, but in the context of a presidential election year and with the so-called "war on women" taking place, even an issue relating to violence against women has become a charged, partisan fight.

The White House threatened to veto the bill earlier this week, on the grounds that it "rolls back existing law and removes long-standing protections for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault." And just after the House vote, Vice President Joe **BIDEN**, an original sponsor of VAWA in 1994, issued a statement trashing the bill.

"The House has passed a version of the Violence Against Women Act that will roll back critical provisions to help victims of abuse. I urge Congress to come together to pass a bipartisan measure that protects all victims. VAWA has been improved each time it's been reauthorized, and this time should be no different," **BIDEN** said.

During the House debate, Democrats charged that the GOP bill would actually leave victims of domestic violence worse off than they are under current law. Unlike the Senate bill, the House proposal discourages undocumented immigrant women from reporting abuse without the threat of being deported. It also makes it harder for Native American women to seek

justice against their abusers, and it leaves out protections for the LGBT community altogether.

Republicans "rarely miss an opportunity to exclude LGBT Americans from important rights and benefits," Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-Calif.) said. "They're saying if you're a woman in a relationship with another woman, then you don't deserve the same protections from domestic abuse or sexual assault."
"It's a shame that this so-called violence against women bill could actually cause violence to women," Rep. Susan Davis (D-Calif.) said. "This bill is outright dangerous."

Republicans maintained that their bill cracks down on fraud by making the grant process more accountable and that it honors criminal laws governing Native American reservations. Both the House and Senate bill authorize spending of about $660 million annually for grants to women's shelters and police training relating to domestic violence and sexual assault.

"Republican men and women both abhor violence against women," Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) said. "I would say that we are more concerned against violence against women ... we want to see the money spent better."

"If you vote against this bill today, you will vote to deny help to millions of victims ... in the name of political gamesmanship," said Rep. Sandy Adams (R-Fla.), the bill's sponsor.

But not all Republicans bought into that mindset. Biggert told The Huffington Post ahead of the vote that she planned to oppose the bill because "there were things that were left out" and because it wasn't put together in a bipartisan way.

"I've always worked on this, every time we've reauthorized it," said Biggert, a 14-year lawmaker. "We could have done so much better by doing a bipartisan bill. It's always been bipartisan."

Biggert said GOP leaders asked her to support the bill in an effort to have all of the Republican women backing it, but she said she declined because it left out protections for women in her district.

"I just said, 'I need to do the right thing.' They said they understood. It's who I represent," she said. "I think that the congresswomen had decided that they were going to do this ... as a women's bill. I'm sort of the odd man out."

The bill's passage came despite opposition from more than 320 advocacy groups, including faith-based groups, women's organizations, civil rights groups and domestic violence workers groups. During the debate, Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) pressed Adams to name groups that supported her bill.

"Well, Mr. Conyers, I can say I do," Adams said.

"I'm glad to know that," Conyers replied. "I think that just about tells everybody where the logic and the support for this bill is. There is none."

That isn't entirely correct, though: The National Coalition of Men endorsed the bill on Tuesday.

CNN

House passes GOP version of Violence Against Women Act renewal
By: Kate Bolduan / May 16, 2012

The House of Representatives passed the Republican version of the Violence Against Women Act on Wednesday, despite strong opposition from Democrats.

The GOP version, passed 222-205, offers a stark contrast from the bill passed by the Senate in late April, which will lead to further political fighting as both chambers attempt to work out a compromise over the law's reauthorization.

Wednesday's vote fell largely along party lines, though 23 Republicans voted against their own party and opposed the bill. Meanwhile, six Democrats defected and voted in favor of the Republican version.

The Violence Against Women Act was first enacted in 1994. It has been reauthorized twice since then with bipartisan support and very little controversy.

That's not the case this time around.

The Senate approved a bill last month with bipartisan support, voting 68-31 with every Republican woman supporting the measure. That version expands coverage to offer services to more illegal immigrants who are victims of domestic abuse. It also specifies that the law include gay, lesbian and transgender victims.

Human Rights Watch released a report Wednesday showing immigrant farmworkers are especially at risk for domestic abuse and argued provisions in the Senate bill -- not the House version -- "would go some way toward fixing the problem and should be enacted."

House Republicans oppose those changes, saying they are unnecessary because the law already covers all victims, and instead favor a narrower version of renewing the law.

Rep. Steny Hoyer of Maryland, the No. 2 House Democrat, opposed the GOP bill and has been calling for a vote on the Senate measure.

"All victims of domestic violence, irrespective of gender, ought to be protected," Hoyer said. "We believe the protection ought to be comprehensive, and we don't believe the Republicans' bill does that."

He joined a number of House Democrats who urged their colleagues to vote against the bill prior to the floor vote on Wednesday.

The White House late Tuesday threatened to veto the House GOP bill, in part because it "fails to include language that would prohibit discrimination against LGBT victims." The veto threat also says the GOP proposals "senselessly remove existing legal protections" and "jeopardize victims by placing them directly in harm's way."

"Today we are now debating something else that I never thought that we would be debating, which is whether or not all victims should be protected or just some," said Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Michigan, in a press conference Wednesday. "And we stand strongly together in saying that every single victim of domestic violence should have the law on their side.

Vice President Joe **BIDEN** reacted to Wednesday's vote by saying the House-passed version of the bill "will roll back critical provisions to help victims of abuse."

House Republican leaders, meanwhile, accused Democrats of creating a phony fight for political gain.

"This is another one of the Democrat gimmicks that goes on around here," House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, said at a recent news conference. "This is an important issue, but for our friends to be playing political games with this, frankly, is very inappropriate."

Sandy Adams, a first-term representative from Florida who rode the Republican wave in the 2010 midterm elections, agreed.

"I want to reauthorize it; I do not want to politicize it. The victims deserve better than that. Americans deserve better than that."

After the vote, Adams said, "Make no mistake about it; this is a victim-centered bill that is all inclusive. Just like past reauthorizations, the House-passed legislation is focused on all victims, without regard for race, ethnicity, sexual preference, or nationality.

House Republicans presented Adams as their new messenger this week in their fight to combat "The War on Women," one of the harshest election-year attack lines congressional Democrats have launched at Republicans. They accuse the GOP of waging this war on issues ranging from contraception to preventive health care coverage.

"I'm pretty sure I'm not at war with myself," said Adams.

She has maintained a relatively low profile during her time in Congress. But she stepped into the spotlight in a big way -- becoming the GOP face of the latest battle on Capitol Hill over the Violence Against Women Act, bringing her own story of domestic abuse with her.

"At an early age, I quit high school at 17 and joined the Air Force. Married by 18," Adams said. "During the marriage, I had a little girl, and I realized really soon that my husband had a penchant for drinking, and when he drank, he turned very mean, very violent."

She took her daughter and left. She later found work as a law enforcement officer before winning a seat in the Florida state House and eventually running for the U.S. House.

"I have experienced it both on a personal level and a law enforcement level," Adams said. "I know how this law has helped so many people in our country."

Her personal story may have helped Republicans push their version of the 18-year-old law and also help deflect the continued Democratic criticism that Republicans are insensitive toward women.

While Adams condemns politics playing a role in this latest congressional standoff, being at the center of it doesn't help someone like her, who is facing some tough politics herself -- she is up against a much higher-profile fellow Republican, Rep. John Mica, in an upcoming primary in Florida.

Now that the House has passed the Republican version of the bill, it will need to reconcile differences with the Senate over its bill.

Both sides agree on the end goal: to renew the law. But in an election year, the lingering question is: How long will Congress drag out this fight?

Associated Press

House version of violence against women bill draws veto threat
By: Laurie Kellman / May 16, 2012

House Republicans set up a showdown Wednesday with the Senate and President Barack Obama over legislation to protect women from domestic violence, a fight that's become as much about female voters this election year as cracking down on abuse.

The House voted 222-205 to reauthorize the 1994 Violence Against Women Act for five years, as the Senate already had done. But big differences remain: Obama, other Democrats and a long list of advocacy groups say the House bill doesn't go far enough to protect abused immigrants, Native Americans or gays. Republicans say their bill does more to protect taxpayers from fraud and maintains the constitutionality of law enforcement procedures on Indian land.

It's unclear whether the differences will be reconciled before the November elections, or whether the bills will be used as campaign weapons.

But a pair of domestic violence survivors who fell on opposite sides of the debate reminded their House colleagues that for them and other abused women it's about far more than politics.

LOCAL PRINT COVERAGE

Youngstown Vindicator

BIDEN meets, thanks Salem firefighters
By: Larry Shields / May 17, 2012

Vice President Joe **BIDEN** got a little choked up when relating three personal episodes, two lifesaving, in which firefighters played a role in his life.

During an informal 35-minute visit with Salem firefighters on Wednesday, **BIDEN** recounted a car crash that took the life of his wife and 1-year-old daughter weeks after he was first elected to the U.S. Senate, crediting firefighters with saving his two sons with the "jaws of life."

He also recalled an aneurysm he suffered in 1988 and, unable to take a medical helicopter for fear of disturbing it, local firefighters ground-transported him to Walter Reed Hospital. He also mentioned a house fire in Delaware, crediting firefighters with saving the structure.

BIDEN appeared in Salem after a campaign speech at a Youngstown factory.

His motorcade drove through downtown Salem.

BIDEN was accompanied by former Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland who is considering a run in 2014 against the man who beat him in 2010 - Republican Gov. John Kasich.

BIDEN and Strickland shook hands with all of the firefighters with **BIDEN** giving each a vice presidential challenge coin with his handshake before speaking to the group.

The visit was interrupted twice when on-duty personnel responded to calls.

"I just came in to say 'hi and to say thank you.' You guys have been to hell and back" with local budget cuts and increased demands, **BIDEN** said. He voiced his support for hiring more firefighters and supplying them with more equipment and praised them for filling myriad roles as first responders.

"Thank God you guys are so crazy, thank God it's in your DNA," **BIDEN** said. "You underestimate your impact."

The visit was arranged by the International Association of Firefighters, which strictly limited it to Local 283 firefighters only.

Former Local 283 President Ken Vernon said, "They were coming here for 283 and that was that. The Secret Service told us who could be here" and specified "no wives or family."

BIDEN himself said he wanted to meet just with the firefighters, Fire Chief Jeff Hughes said.

Mayor John Berlin could not see **BIDEN** but requested a gold city lapel pin and business card he gave to a Secret Service agent be presented to **BIDEN**.

"He's the second-most powerful man in the world," Berlin said.

"We may differ on the issues but this is our government in action. In our world you have to put these things aside when he comes to your town."

Capt. Shawn Mesler said Strickland was aware of and personally thanked firefighters for their battle during the fire district days.

After the meeting, **BIDEN** greeted children on the South Ellsworth Avenue driveway, standing for photos, holding babies, shaking hands and signing autographs.

Eighteen-year-old Salem High School senior Meg Bell scored a triple when she took some upclose photos of **BIDEN**, had her picture taken with him and got his autograph on her cell phone - "Meg, Joe **BIDEN**, 5-16-12."

Bell, who attended on the spur of the moment with her mother, Julie Bell, said, "I'm speechless pretty much. I'm a fan of Obama ... and **BIDEN**, of course. I've never met anyone famous before.

"He was so personable, nothing fake about him, he was shaking hands with all of us older kids," Bell said, adding the cover of her cell phone will be removed for a keepsake.

"I honestly thought it was nicer than I thought it would be," she said.

Her mother was glad both of her kids have seen sitting vice presidents in person. Her son, Josh, saw Dan Quayle in 1992 when her son was 5, she said.

Salem seventh-grader Joey Barcey, 14, shook hands with **BIDEN** and "got some pictures of him."

"It was pretty nice. He treats kids with respect. I'm glad I met him and am honored," Barcey said.

After **BIDEN** departed, Hughes, who acknowledged he was a little nervous at first, said, "Was that fun or what?"

He was surprised when **BIDEN** entered the building.

"I expected to see people come in ahead of him ... instead he just blew in and said, 'How ya doing?'"

Vernon was also surprised, thinking the atmosphere would have been more formal.

Lt. Rod Hughes had seen President Reagan when he was in the Navy and Obama before he became president. **BIDEN** was the third top-ranking statesmen he'd seen in person.

"He's a personable individual," Hughes said.

Inspector Aaron Loper said it was a rare opportunity to speak candidly with **BIDEN**.

BIDEN also mentioned the Obama administration's failed American Jobs Act, which included money to rehire 450,000 firefighters, police officers and teachers by raising taxes on people who earn at least $1 million per year.

"We said there's an easy way to pay for it and we thought everybody'd go along," **BIDEN** said.

The Salem Fire Department was awarded a FEMA grant last year of more than $300,000 to maintain staffing levels through 2013, according to the Obama campaign. The department was awarded more than $46,000 this year to replace a worn-out air compressor.

Youngstown Vindicator
BIDEN makes city stops
By: Dave Gossett / May 17, 2012

Vice President Joe **BIDEN** took time out Wednesday from a two-day campaign swing in Eastern Ohio to enjoy a chicken parmesan dinner at Naples Spaghetti House and buy ice cream for his staff.

He also had time to shake hands and pose for photographs when he visited the Joe Staffilino Sr. home in the city's West End.

BIDEN arrived late Wednesday afternoon and met the Staffilino family and former Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland at Naples, where he spent nearly two hours greeting dinner customers.

"I have heard a lot about this restaurant from Ted Strickland. I love Italian food and I'm hungry,' **BIDEN** told co-owners Susan, Tim and Lisa Delatore.

"We are honored to have you here," replied Susan Delatore.

The Staffilino family at the restaurant included Joe Staffilino Sr., president of Staffilino Chevrolet in Martins Ferry; Donna Marie Staffilino, wife of Joe Sr.; Joe Staffilino Jr., general manager of Staffilino Chevrolet; Angela Lee Kessler Staffilino, wife of Joe Jr.; Anthony Staffilino, Joe Jr.'s son; and Cassie Wamsley, Joe Jr.'s stepdaughter.

BIDEN was set to be at the Staffilino Chevrolet dealership in Martins Ferry at 10:15 a.m. today, where he was set to deliver remarks on the Obama's administration work on the auto industry rescue bailout.

Earlier Wednesday, **BIDEN** campaigned at a Youngstown factory where he called Republican challenger Mitt Romney a corporate raider.

The **BIDEN** campaign caravan traveled to Joe Staffilino Sr.'s residence, where the vice president spent approximately 35 minutes before emerging to greet neighbors and pose for photographs in their front yard across the street.

His last stop was at the Hollywood City Center Dairy Queen, where **BIDEN** bought ice cream cones and milk shakes for campaign staff members and two local residents who weren't expecting to meet the vice president.

Chris and Dianne Murphy had stopped at the Hollywood City Center Dairy Queen for late-evening ice cream cones to celebrate their daughter Bailie's softball game victory earlier in the afternoon.

That's when **BIDEN**, accompanied by local reporters and photographers, members of the national press corps, campaign staff and Secret Service agents walked through the front door.

"I was pretty surprised to see him walk in like that. My daughter had played a softball game at Beaver Local and we ran into traffic on state Route 7 coming home. We had heard Vice President **BIDEN** was coming to the city, but never expected to see him in the Dairy Queen," said Chris Murphy.

BIDEN enjoyed a chocolate-coated vanilla swirl ice cream cone and started asking people around him if they wanted ice cream.

He soon spotted Christopher and Bailie Murphy.

"Do you play football?" **BIDEN** asked the younger Christopher.

"Yes sir," Christopher replied.

"I played when I was in school. Where do you play at?" **BIDEN** continued.

"Catholic Central High School," replied Murphy.

"How about some ice cream?" **BIDEN** asked Christopher and his sister, Bailie.

"If I knew you were coming, I would have waited for you to buy me ice cream," called out an unidentified woman in the Dairy Queen.

BIDEN bought ice cream cones and milk shakes for several staff members and Jefferson County Sheriff Fred Abdalla before leaving the business shortly before closing time.

"It was a little nerve-wracking when all those people started coming in. And then we saw Vice President **BIDEN** and it was even more nerve wracking. But he was very nice and we got all the orders taken care of," said Dairy Queen clerk Josie Goodwin.

TELEVISION COVERAGE

MSNBC

Morning Joe Package on VP Joe BIDEN w/ Joe Scarbourough, Mika Brzenzinksi, Willie Geist, Jim Cramer, Mike Barnacle
May 17, 2012

MIKA: back with us on set we have jim cramer and mike barnacle.

JOE: you know, i would say the populist stuff doesn't work because it always seems so phony. but **BIDEN**, **BIDEN** is telling the truth. it works for **BIDEN**, because he feels it. working class guy. he feels it and, by the way, you look at all of these millionaires that run our country and then you look at his -- you know, his taxes every year, he's -- you know, he hasn't cashed in.

BARNACLE: he feels it, he understands it, he lives it, he's vice president of the united states, he has secret service protection but he's still joe **BIDEN**. part of him is still joe **BIDEN** from scranton, pennsylvania. we keep hearing ripples that there is a little animosity or anger towards the vice president on the gay stuff

MIKA: oh, no, i can't believe it. not for a second.

BARNACLE: for forcing the president's hand. but he is a valuable asset to this president.

MIKA: he's the best thing they got when it comes to politics. i'm sorry, he knows exactly what he's doing.

>> he gets it. and mika, boy, he went after them.

MIKA: let's show more of that fiery speech at a youngstown manufacturing plant yesterday. the vice president addressed the challenges facing the middle class while taking aim at mitt romney for his tenure at the investment firm bain capital.

BIDEN: this election is going to be a choice between two fundamentally different philosophies, and that choice is about whether or not we're going to rebuild the middle class or continue to help those at the very top and hope everything works out well. romney made sure the guys on top got to play by a separate set of rules. he ran up massive debts in the middle class laws. and, folks, he thinks that experience is going to help our economy? let's take a look. look, with these guys past is prologue, man. so i want you to think about what he'll do as president.

BIDEN: he's a patriot. he's a generous man. he gives to his church. he has a beautiful family. but he doesn't get it. he doesn't get what's at the core of all this. it's about people's dignity.

JOE: you know, i say populism doesn't work. it works. there are two things, he doesn't get it, which republicans always trail democrats in that. does such and such understand your problems, your family's problems. but there's another thing, jim. and this is really a message and it's the first time i've really heard anybody deliver it that well. if every democrat could deliver it that well, then the last four or five years could be used for their advantage, even next year. and that is, he thinks his rich friends should play by a different set of rules. because the american dream -- i was talking about my dad. my dad worked hard, he was unemployed for a year and a half. there was never any resentment, but he expected everybody, whether it was the kennedys or the people next door to play by the same damn set of rules that he had to play by. that's a pretty powerful message.

CRAMER: i thought it was. i remember riding down on the train when he was still a senator. he always took the train. he said to me i'm the poorest guy in the senate. 100 senators and i have the least amount of money. but has equal power. it reminds me exactly of what he's saying. now, the 1% in this country, i've said this on "mad money," it’s not a problem to say it, doesn't play by the same rules. the reason why, they pay far less tax. now, the 15% tax that romney pays, it should be an issue again because i was a hedge fund manager. i didn't pay this. i just thoughtt was wrong to be able to convert your ordinary income into capital gains is strictly something you can do if you're real rich. no one else can do it because they can't get away with it. just wrong.

JOE: We have a friend that kept talking to us about, oh, you should do this, you should do that. talking about buy a small plane a couple years ago.

and then took out a balance sheet and he explained with all the tax breaks and everything else that if you paid a certain amount, at the end through 100% depreciation and tax deductions and your business, he showed in a very like complicated way how after four or five years it was free. and you know what, he was right! but my dad needed to buy a buick in 1973 or somebody in youngstown, ohio, today trying to get by, the rules aren't skewed that way for them. there's one rule after another rule after another rule that seems to skew for the rich.

CRAMER: the rich have power to be able to influence the laws. the rich are without a doubt the most clever about the tax code. remember the law says very clear. as long as you don't evade taxes, it's your perfect right to avoid taxes. that's always been the case. but who has enough money to be able to hire a lawyer to look through the code and avoid taxes. only rich people.

JOE: people talk about taxing the rich. don't tax the businessperson that makes $250,000 to $400,000, don't raise their taxes because they can't afford the accountants and the tax lawyers to make sure that their small business continues to grow and continues to hire people.

MIKA: The romney campaign, by the way, responded to what the vice president was saying and the attacks on the former governor's career at bain capital saying, quote, 'president obama can't come close to matching the many years of experience that mitt romney has as a private businessman, so he has chosen to attack the free market. millions across this country are struggling and deserve a leader who understands how the economy works.' and that would be the political counter message, which is. mitt romney understands the economy?

JOE: Again, though, he does it for some reason that message works with barack obama. like a guy who is a law professor and everything. so if he says that about barack obama, okay, you're right, you're right. but when joe **BIDEN** says -- and it shouldn't be the case because you look at barack obama and his grandparents raised him in hawaii, very middle class upbringing. but for some reason **BIDEN**, like when **BIDEN** says my parents believed i could be president of the united states or i could be a millionaire, you know he's telling the truth. so that brush back about being anti-capitalism doesn't work against **BIDEN** as well.

BARNACLE: No. The vice president of the united states, Joe **BIDEN**, has a picture in his head. he can see the house on top of the hill where the rich people live in the town that he grew up in, and he knows instinctively that the people who live at the bottom of the hill, the **BIDEN**s, the Scarboroughs when we were younger know they don't represent the people on the bottom of the hill. but there's a connection and it's called trust between the rich people at the top of the hill and the people at the bottom of the hill. the people at the bottom of the hill believe they can get up there to the top of the hill but once that line of trust is broken like with the banks, with the breaks that the rich get, once that line of trust is broken, then you've got a problem and that's where Joe **BIDEN** can really say it.

JOE: Which again, is the reason why Joe **BIDEN'S** message works. And there's not that resentment. i told the story after my dad died when we were in mississippi, we'd drive past country club drive and look at all the big houses and look at the golf course. if i stepped foot on it, they'd probably shoot me in the back of the head. they probably still would. but my parents said look at those houses, look at those big houses. you keep working hard, you do well in school, you'll be able to live in one of those houses. and i promise you, being a doctor or a lawyer in 1971-72 when my dad was unemployed and we were driving by that, that was about as far removed from my existence as being, you know, premier of china. but my parents were like work hard, do it, you can live there.

GEIST: and when joe **BIDEN** gets it going in a setting like that, and you talk about political athletes, purely political, he's throwing his arms around guys, he's giving them the business, he's whispering.

MIKA: it's genuine, though.

GEIST: no, i'm saying he really pulls it off.

MIKA: he's a connecter.

GEIST: if we agree that a small group of swing voters maybe in ohio, maybe in florida will decide who the next president of the united states is, that's pretty effective right there.

MSNBC
Rachel Maddow on VAWA
May 16, 2012

MADDOW: it is a special visa program under the violence against women act. republicans in Washington are right to roll that back. the violence against women act was first passed almost 20 years ago. when he was in the senate, vice president joe **BIDEN** wrote the original bill. it passed with bipartisan support. the act was reauthorized in the year 2000, reauthorized again in 2005. it has never been a particularly controversial thing, until now. republicans in the senate initially voted it down this year on a party line vote. they gave it zero votes in committee. it finally did pass the full senate on a 68-31 vote. all 31 no votes there were all male republican senators. all the republican women in the senate voted for it, but 31 men voted no. but now it's over in the house. and house republicans are not for it. they introduced a republican counterproposal that undoes big portions of the violence against women act. their changes, for example, would take away the anonymity from their special visa program for beaten women, thereby advancing the important public policy goal of alerting the abusive husbands of mail order brides if the woman they're beating is trying to get away there them. why has the violence against women act turned into this? why have the politics around this issue turned so much this year? after being such a such a non-controversial thing for decades. it's because the right wing of the right wing decided this year they're going to make an issue out of it. this is a letter signed by the family research council, by the eagle forum, by liberty council, which is affiliated with the jerry folwell university, also the traditional values coalition. this is them writing to congress to say, don't reauthorize if violence against women act. one of the signatories to this letter is a former vice chair of the North Carolina republican party, who himself has a felony domestic violence conviction on his record. he got a suspended sentence of 18 months in prison after admitting to beating his wife into the hospital, breaking her nose, breaking her toes, breaking a piece of furniture over her back. police found his wife in the couple's home on Christmas day, bleeding from the face and suffering from other injuries. he pled guilty to felony aggravated assault in that case. he is now one of the signatories to the vote against the violence against women act letter,

right? it's a letter signed by him and by all those groups that have the word "values" in their names. one of the other signatories in this coalition that seems to have persuaded republicans to be against the violence against women act this year is a group called s.a.v.e., a group based in Rockville, Maryland. they have been lobbying house republicans to oppose the violence against women act this year. they've been lobbying specifically to roll back some of the protections for immigrant women. the treasurer of that group, s.a.v.e., that's lobbying to get rid of the advisory rule that would help mail order brides, one of the treasurers of that group is the founder of this thing that everybody thought was porn on my website all day today. the russian mail order bride company. which again promises that these women will follow their husband's lead and stick with the marriage, even when times get tough. and just think how much tougher you can make those times if she knows that not sticking with the marriage means she gets deported back to russia. so, yeah, the whole republicans have a war on women thing, this is the sort of thing that has given rise to that sentiment, that republicans have a war on women. this is how you earn a political epithet like that. for what it's earth, democrats have been fighting like heck on this issue. president Obama has personally brought this issue up multiple times in recent weeks. the president all but promising to veto the republican's rollback of the violence against women a act, which passed the house today. vice president **BIDEN** has brought the issue up multiple times. he, of course, wrote the first violence against women act. one of the president's top advisers, Valerie Jarrett, has an op-ed out on issue today. Nancy Pelosi has been front paging this issue in her position as the democrat's leader in the house. and today at a press conference on capitol hill, a Wisconsin democratic congresswoman named Gwen Moore went all out, not just on the legislation, but on what in her personal experience has convinced her that the violence against women act is so important.

[CLIP]
MOORE: you know, one experience that i had to occurred to me, i thought of this morning was a time when i took a ride with a guy i thought was a friend to go get some fried chicken. and he decided to take a detour behind some buildings to rape me and choke me almost to death. i was sort of seeing that little light that you often hear about. as a woman of color, i am particularly aggrieved that this bill ignores the special circumstances of women who are minorities. women who are in the shadows. stop playing games with the lives of women! this is yet another -- they don't want to hear us talk about it being a war on women, but this is a direct assault on

women's lives. three women a day die from victimization. and i would implore my colleagues to stop playing games.
[END CLIP]

MADDOW: the house voted on and passed the republican rollback of the violence against women act today. passed it on a nearly party line vote. so that was today in this crazy war on women idea that has no basis in reality. you want to know what republicans are going to do tomorrow to earn that epithet all over again? ...