

# JIM COSTA

Representing the 16th District of California

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## Costa, Poe Introduce Bill to Protect Crime Victims Fund

Washington, DC – This week, Congressional Victims’ Rights Caucus (VRC) co-chairmen and co-founders, Reps. Jim Costa and Ted Poe, introduced legislation that would protect the Crime Victims Fund from budget sequestration which is threatening to severely reduce services for victims of crime. The fund is backed solely by criminal fines, forfeitures and other penalties, not federal tax dollars, and it has no impact on the national deficit.



“Budget decisions reflect priorities and this bill puts protecting crime victims ahead of misguided budget gimmicks,” said Costa. “The Crime Victims Fund has zero impact on the federal deficit but every dollar spent from the account has a huge impact on a crime victim during their time of need. We all want to fix our debt challenges, but squeezing the Crime Victims Fund doesn’t move us an inch closer to that goal.”

“The Crime Victims Fund is the lifeblood of victim service providers,” said Poe. “Victim service providers do important work, helping victims heal, cope and persevere after a crime. This bill will ensure that they are able to continue that work. The money in the Crime Victims Fund is collected exclusively from criminals (not taxpayers) and is used to aid those who the criminals have hurt. Any cuts in this fund will do nothing to reduce the deficit and only rob victims of critical services they need to move on with their lives.”

Current law requires that all funds not spent in a single fiscal year “shall remain in the Fund for obligation in future fiscal years, without fiscal year limitation.” The White House’s Office of Management and Budget now projects that the Fund’s balance will be \$11.431 billion in 2014.

Despite large fund balances, the amount of assistance to states in 2012 was 30 percent less, in real, inflation-adjusted dollars, than it was in 2000. The federal cap on spending from the fund has lead to 630,000 fewer victims receiving services than those who gained assistance in 2007.

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Sequestering the Crime Victims Fund does nothing to reduce the long-term deficit, and merely further defers funding for critical, often life-saving services to victims of crime.

As co-chairmen and co-founders of the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus, Costa and Poe have been leaders in bringing the issue of crime victims' rights to the forefront in Congress. The mission of the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus is to elevate crime victim issues in Congress in a bipartisan manner without infringing on the rights of the accused and to represent and to advocate before the Administration and within Congress on behalf of crime victims.



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