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Wednesday June 24, 2009

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## CRAPO, LEAHY INTRODUCE CRIME VICTIMS REAUTHORIZATION BILL

**Contact:** Susan Wheeler  
Wednesday, June 24, 2009

Washington, DC – Idaho Senator Mike Crapo and Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont) have introduced legislation to preserve and enhance federal assistance to crime victims under the Victims of Crime Act. The Crime Victims Fund Preservation Act will ensure that victims of crime, through victim service providers around the country, will receive essential services that they need to become survivors and move forward with their lives.

The Crime Victims Fund serves roughly four million crime victims every year, including victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, elder abuse, and drunk driving, as well as survivors of homicide victims. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). The Act serves as the primary source of financial support for crime victim services. The Crime Victims Fund is supported by money collected from fines, penalty assessments, bond forfeitures collected from convicted federal offenders, and other collections. It is not supported by taxpayer dollars. Grants are awarded annually by the Department of Justice under a statutory formula.

"These non-taxpayer dollars should not be used to pay for taxpayer-funded programs," said Crapo. "We expect a steady increase over the next five years in this fund and I will aggressively work to make sure these resources go to the people for which they were originally intended. Unfortunately, victims of violence nationwide remain significantly underserved. Congress needs to honor the commitment it made to these victims 25 years ago."

"This bill will support the intent of Congress to use revenues generated from criminal fines and forfeitures to provide direct services and compensation to crime victims," said Leahy. "This legislation will help ensure sufficient, stable and predictable resources for victims of crime and their families, and will allow victim service providers to plan ahead in order to maximize these resources. Victim service professionals have seen a clear increase in victimization with the economic downturn, as job losses and economic stress translate into increased violence in the home and in our communities. This legislation will build upon Congress's strong support for victims of crime by improving the mechanism through which funding is distributed to victim service providers throughout the States."

The Leahy-Crapo legislation will authorize a minimum funding level for programs under the Victims of Crime Act through 2014. In 2000, for the first time, Congress imposed a "cap" on the fund to allow Congress to ensure that adequate resources remained in the fund from year-to-year. In subsequent years, this cap has fluctuated due to its imposition on a year to year basis. Nationwide, more than 4000 agencies are supported by VOCA dollars every year. According to the National Census of Domestic Violence Services, on one day in 2008, nearly 61,000 adults and children sought support from local domestic violence programs. Due to lack of resources,

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*Last updated 05/21/2009*

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