

Crime Victims Fund Preservation Act of 2009

S. 1340 and H.R. 3402

Fact Sheet

- The Crime Victims Fund is a special account made up entirely of fines and other penalties paid by convicted federal offenders and dedicated exclusively to a variety of services to help crime victims; **there are no taxpayer dollars** in the Fund.
- Grants to state VOCA victim assistance programs fund services to more than 4 million victims of all types of crimes, including, among others, domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, survivors of homicide victim, drunk driving crashes, stalking, identity theft, and elder abuse.
- Because of fluctuations in Fund deposits, Congress limits or “caps” annual obligations from the Fund, resulting in an accumulated “rainy day” balance to ensure stable funding for victim services.
- Because the VOCA cap did not keep pace with the costs of programs, state crime victim assistance grants were cut by \$87 million (22 percent) from 2006 to 2008.
- During this same period, however, the Fund’s “rainy day” balance increased by more than \$700 million — from \$1.3 billion in 2006 to \$2 billion in 2008. Based on criminal fines that federal courts have already imposed but not yet collected, the balance is projected to grow even more through 2014.
- **Crime victims’ needs continue to increase.** Although these prior cuts were restored by a combination of the 2009 Appropriations Act and the economic recovery act, the need to support crime victim services continue to increase. Examples:
 - According to U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime, 366,000 *fewer* crime victims received VOCA funded victim assistance services in 2008 than in 2007.
 - The National Census of Domestic Violence Services reports that, on one day in 2008, nearly 61,000 adults and children sought support from local domestic violence programs. But on that same day, almost 9,000 requests were unmet due to lack of resources.
 - Calls to the National Crime Victim Hotline operated by the National Center for Victims of Crime have increased, especially for victims of a variety of frauds, such as work at home, secret shopper and investment schemes, mortgage and construction fraud.
- **S. 1340 (introduced by Senators Patrick Leahy and Mike Crapo) and H.R. 3402 (introduced by Representatives Ted Poe and Jim Costa) are essential to preserving the Fund and meeting victims’ needs.** These bills will statutorily establish a minimum annual cap on VOCA through 2014. The caps will increase the VOCA cap by 23 percent each year yet leave a balance of at least \$800 million, enough to ensure the Fund’s sustainability.
- The bills will provide a steady, reasonable and predictable growth in victim services through 2014 without jeopardizing the Fund’s ability to continue supporting victim services.