

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2008

Congressman David R. Obey
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
The Capitol, Room H-218,
Washington, D.C. 20515

Congressman Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
The Capitol, Room H-218,
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Alan Mollohan
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Obey and Mollohan and Ranking Members Lewis and Frelinghuysen:

We once again write to strongly recommend that appropriators protect and restore funding of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)'s Crime Victims Fund in order to support critical assistance for crime victims throughout our Nation. For the past 25 years, VOCA has been the preeminent Federal program that provides a wide range of compensation and assistance programs without the use of any taxpayer dollars.

Congress began capping annual obligations from the Fund in 2000 with the express purpose of ensuring stable funding for these vital programs. Although Congress has repeated this pledge every year since, it is an unfortunate fact that, for the past three years, this goal has not been achieved and will be further eroded under the Administration's 2009 budget request.

Unless the cap keeps pace with increases in other VOCA programs and as new costs, such as the Justice Department's administrative costs, gets charged to the Fund, the amount of VOCA funding available for state victim assistance grants is reduced. As a result, VOCA grants for state victim assistance programs have been steadily cut. In 2007, even with a steady cap, state assistance grants were cut by \$25 million. It is anticipated that state assistance grants will see an even larger reduction in 2008 because Congress lowered the cap by \$35 million and the Department of Justice is, for the first time, charging the Fund for its administrative costs. Based on the Administration's 2009 budget request, we anticipate further cuts of \$52 million. In sum, the amount of the Fund made available for state assistance grants is likely to be reduced by \$159 million—40 percent—since 2006.

This is especially unconscionable in light of the fact that the Administration estimates that there will be a 2009 opening balance of \$1.9 billion. Those are the funds that Congress has retained for precisely this purpose: to ensure stable funding for victim services. We therefore request that a

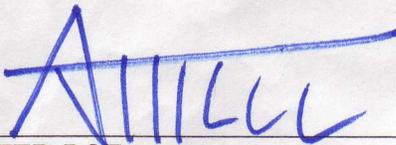
sufficient amount of these retained funds be released to at least restore funding for state victim assistance grants to the same level they received in 2006.

The Administration's 2009 budget request includes the use of \$50 million for the Antiterrorism Reserve as part of its \$590 million cap request. In addition, it is assumed that the Office for Justice Programs will continue to charge the Crime Victims Fund (along with other OJP programs) for a portion of its administrative costs. In light of those additional costs, we estimate that the 2009 VOCA cap must be no less than \$770 million, merely to maintain stable state assistance services. This amount does not reflect increased costs to meet the needs of additional crime victims, to expand services, or to even keep up with the ever-rising operating costs, such as postage to send out victim notifications, heat and utilities for emergency shelters or gasoline to transport crime victims.

The 4,400 public and nonprofit victim assistance programs that provide essential services, such as crisis intervention, counseling, shelter and criminal justice system support to some 3.8 million victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, drunk driving, homicide, stalking and all other types of crime, rely greatly on VOCA to maintain these services.

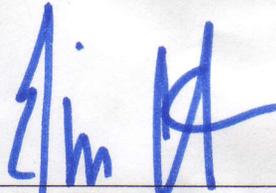
More than 40 national crime victim advocacy and criminal justice organizations join us in requesting that Congress honor its continued pledge to maintain a consistent level of financial support for state VOCA victim assistance programs.

Sincerely,



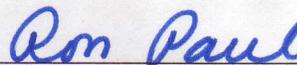
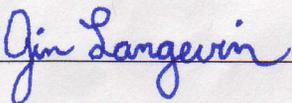
TED POE
Member of Congress
TEXAS

Co-Chair
Congressional Victim's Rights Caucus



JIM COSTA
Member of Congress
CALIFORNIA

Co-Chair
Congressional Victim's Rights Caucus



Neil Angerson

Jan Scott

Stephen G. Lynch

Brian Higgins

Doris O. Matsui

Mike Daph

Jay McHenry

Jeff Anslee

Christopher P. Cady

Steve Cohen

Todd L. Platts

Clayton Sage

Tom Hill

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Joseph A. Berman

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Nancy Boyd

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Lois Capps

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Abigail

Steven H. Norton

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Carolyn B. Maloney

