

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 2, 2015

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman
The Honorable Barbara Mikulski, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Mikulski:

As you begin work on the Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, we respectfully request that outlays from the Crime Victims Fund be as high as possible to support core Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) assistance programs and fulfill the needs of victims across the country. We also request that you oppose efforts to use the Fund to cover expenses other than those authorized by VOCA.

In FY 2000, Congress began limiting the amount of Fund deposits that could be obligated each year. This was to provide a stable level of funding available for these programs in future years despite annual fluctuations in Fund deposits. Congress also amended the law to ensure that all receipts remain in the Fund for obligation in future fiscal years. In subsequent years, the balances in the Fund have grown in excess of \$12 billion. These balances are needed to support essential services to victims' assistance programs facing resource strains in every state.

We request that the Subcommittee oppose rescissions to the Fund. We are concerned the President has proposed diverting money from the Fund for other purposes without taking steps to ensure the continued viability of the Fund. As you know, the Senate has consistently voted to prevent the diversion of Fund resources to other activities. The Subcommittee should oppose efforts to use the Fund to cover expenses other than those authorized for the Fund and utilize the balances to address unmet needs.

While the Fund's balances are growing, so is the need for victim assistance and compensation. Victim service professionals have seen a clear rise in demand from a support network facing strained financial resources. Limits on state government funding and significant decreases in private giving present additional challenges. With the increased need for funding, and the growing balances in the Fund, now is the time to release additional money from the Fund for the purpose for which it was collected.

The balances in the Crime Victims Fund are sufficient to provide significantly increased funding without jeopardizing the Fund's future sustainability. Accordingly, we strongly urge the Subcommittee to release as much funding as possible to help meet the dire needs of victims of all types of crime throughout the nation and that you oppose efforts to use the Fund to cover expenses other than those authorized by VOCA.

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Thank you for your leadership in this critical area and for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



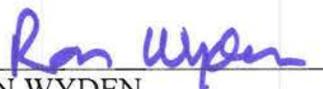
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PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator



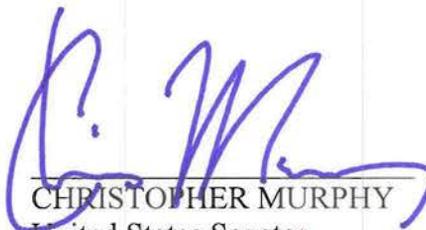
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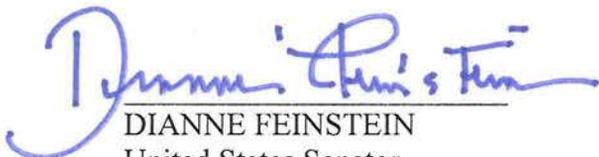
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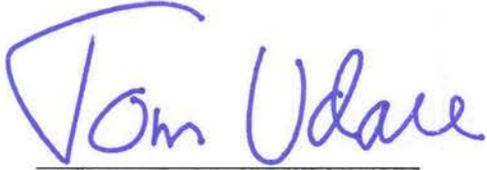
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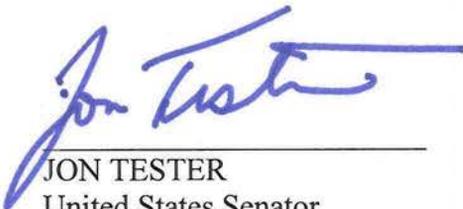
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