

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 16, 2013

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science and Related Agencies
H-310, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science and Related Agencies
H-310, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Wolf and Ranking Member Fattah:

We greatly appreciate your efforts to help crime victims by supporting the Crime Victims Fund and Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) programs. As you begin work on the Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2014, we respectfully request that you raise the cap on spending from the Crime Victims Fund. A growing need for these funds nationwide, coupled with a growing balance in the Fund, compels us to request a 2014 VOCA cap of at least \$1 billion.

Since 1984, the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) has provided federal grants to provide essential, often life-saving services for crime victims. The Crime Victims Fund is *not financed by taxpayer dollars* but by fines, forfeitures, and other penalties paid by federal criminal offenders. By statute, the Fund is dedicated solely to supporting victim services.

Because these non-tax dollars have already been collected and deposited into the Fund, raising the cap does not add to the national deficit or debt.

Every year, state VOCA victim assistance grants provide vital direct assistance that supports thousands of public and community-based agencies nationwide in providing services to more than 3.7 million victims of assault, robbery, gang violence, intoxicated drivers, fraud, elder abuse, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, sexual assault, stalking, and many others. Additionally, VOCA supports victim assistance for those involved in the federal criminal justice system, including survivors of terrorist acts. VOCA also helps victims with financial assistance for medical care, mental health counseling, lost wages, and funeral and burial costs.

Although the balance in the Fund continues to grow, the release of these dedicated funds has not kept pace with the need for victim assistance and compensation. In fact, our nation's ability to maintain the same level of services to crime victims has been diminishing while the needs continue to increase. Consider the following statistics:

- VOCA assistance funding in 2012 was 30 percent less in real dollars than in 2000.
- According to Office of Victims of Crime reports, 380,000 fewer crime victims received VOCA-funded services in 2011 than in 2007.

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- The imposition of Department of Justice administrative costs and sequestration will result in a projected total of 785,000 fewer crime victims receiving VOCA assistance-supported services.
- The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) 2011 census found that on the same day that 67,399 adults and children received housing and advocacy services, 10,581 requests for services went unmet due to inadequate funding and resources.
- Eighty-eight percent of state domestic violence coalitions reported an increase in the demand for services, while 69 percent said programs have experienced funding decreases. Since 2011, at least 19 domestic violence programs have been forced to close entirely.
- A 2012 survey by the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV) indicated that 60 percent of rape crisis centers have a waiting list for counseling and 30 percent for support groups. Half of these centers have reduced staff in the past year with more than 100 advocates laid off and 120 vacant positions.

With the increased need for funding, and the ample balance in the Fund, now is the time to raise the cap on the Crime Victims Fund and release additional money for the purpose Congress intended and for which it has been collected. The balance in the Crime Victims Fund is more than enough to provide this funding level without jeopardizing the Fund's future sustainability.

For these reasons, we strongly urge the Committee to raise the 2014 VOCA cap to at least \$1 billion to help continue meeting the dire needs of all crime victims throughout the nation. Thank you for your leadership and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



JIM COSTA
Member of Congress



EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress



ROBERT A. BRADY
Member of Congress



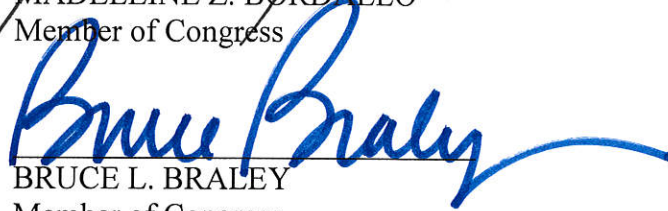
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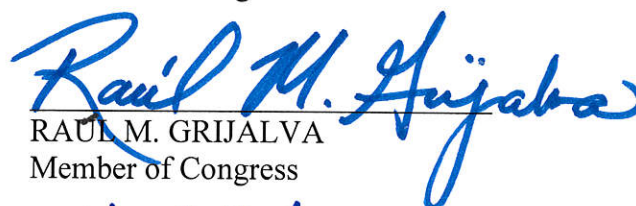

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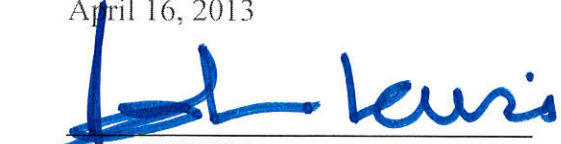

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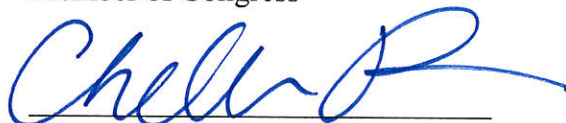
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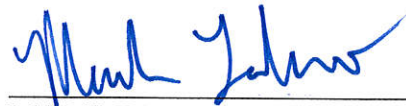
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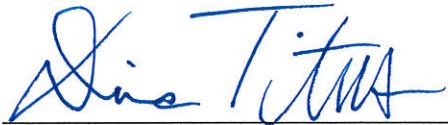


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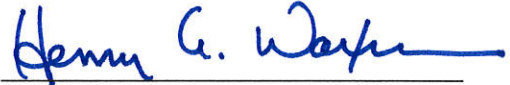
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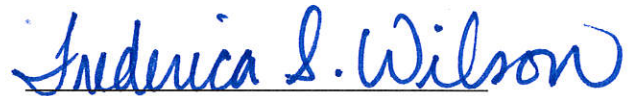
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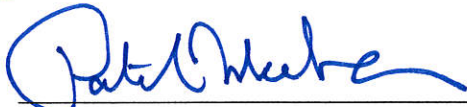
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