

SJM 2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Prepared By: Gillian Fischer, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/6, 2/20

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Urges Congress to enact legislation alleviating the funding crisis in the Crime Victims Fund.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Crime Victims Fund (the Fund) was established by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) of 1984. The Fund is financed by fines and penalties from convictions in federal cases, not from tax dollars. As of December 2024, the Fund balance is over \$4.2 billion and includes deposits (also known as receipts) from federal criminal fines, forfeited bail bonds, penalties, and special assessments collected by U.S. Attorneys' Offices, federal courts, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Federal, state, and Tribal victim assistance programs receive formula grants, discretionary grants, and set-asides according to an established annual allocation process. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the CVF balance dropped by 82.94% from \$13.08 billion in 2017 to \$2.23 billion by the end of 2024. As a result of this shortfall, Congress dropped the statutory obligation cap from \$1.9 billion in FY2023 to \$1.35 billion in FY2024 resulting in each state seeing a decrease in funding for victim assistance programs.