



February 6, 2025

Re: Support for Victims of Crime Act grants (HB 3196)

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Chotzen and Wallan, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

On behalf of Safety Compass, we are submitting testimony in support of HB 3196, which appropriates money to the Department of Justice to backfill reductions in federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grants.

Safety Compass is a survivor founded, survivor led non-profit whose mission is to offer relentless hope and navigational support for survivors of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking, in Washington, Marion, Clackamas, and Multnomah County. Safety Compass provides advocacy support services to survivors navigating the medical, criminal, and social justice systems. Our advocates provide in-person support during law enforcement interviews, referrals to housing, detox, and other social service providers, and long-term community-based case management. We operate a 24-hour crisis hotline where any moment of every day an advocate can offer support over the phone or respond in-person on the scene within one hour per a request from a medical professional, DHS worker, police officer or social worker who suspects trafficking.

Background

In 1984, Congress signed VOCA into law and created the Crime Victims Fund (CVF). VOCA funding (appropriated from the CVF) is the primary source of federal grants for victim services, including services for survivors of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, human trafficking, elder abuse, and other crimes. It supports victims in some of the most high-risk scenarios who are experiencing strangulation, stalking, and an increased risk of serious injury and homicide. **It also matches 75% of eligible state victim compensation funding.**

Impact

Programs across the state rely on VOCA funding to provide services, including Children's Advocacy Centers, District Attorney Victim Assistance Programs (DAVAPs), Community-based Nonprofit Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (DVSA) Programs, and Campus Sexual Assault Programs. These grants fund vital services to survivors of domestic and sexual violence, ranging from crisis intervention to long-term healing.

Safety Compass served more than 400 survivors in 2024 and if VOCA funds were to be discontinued, this would result in shutting down our direct services to survivors as well as shutting off our hotline that provide services to survivors that are statistically at the greatest risk of homicide. Literally all phone based and in -person advocacy services would cease to exist.

Bipartisan efforts are underway federally to create a long-term solution for the CVF, and your support in creating a bridge for organizations like ours to stabilize funding and our ability to offer life-saving services to survivors is essential. We know that supporting victims of crime is a nonpartisan issue, and these efforts will continue. There is a separate bill in the Oregon Senate to support a federal fix—[SJM 2 Urging Congress to fund VOCA](#).

For the above reasons, **we urge you to support this request for bridge funding of VOCA grants by passing HB 3196**. Crime victims and survivors in Oregon deserve the safety and well-being that these funds afford. Organizations like ours that provide these services cannot continue delivering them without your support. Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Esther Garrett, Found & CEO
Safety Compass