

February 6, 2025

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

On behalf of the **Center for Hope & Safety** we are submitting testimony in support of SJM 2, which urges Congress to enact legislation to fix the funding crisis that exists in the Crime Victims Fund.

Center for
**HOPE &
SAFETY**



Our mission at the Center for Hope & Safety is to provide a safe environment for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking and to educate the public about the issues surrounding victimization.

We operate programs that respond directly to the needs identified by survivors of violence and our philosophy reflects the survivors' right to receive information about abuse and their right to make their own choices from a wide range of options.

Last year we had 38,000 contacts with survivors and our shelter provided over 10,000 nights to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking in Marion and Polk Counties. We also have a housing program that has a 96% success rate in assisting families into permanent housing.

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.

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because everyone deserves a life free of violence

In the words of survivors served by the Center for Hope & Safety:

“It’s an awful feeling finding yourself in the position to need your help, and I know people come and go but I just want to let each person here know that I am so grateful, because in my worst times when I have felt alone and lost and tired beyond reason – it is such a relief to have somewhere to go, someone to listen and someone to help remind me to breathe and put one foot in front of the other.”

“This program really made me feel stronger when I was at my lowest. Thank you so much for all the support you gave me and my kids and for giving us a safe place to grow.”

Bipartisan efforts are underway federally to create a long-term solution for the CVF, and your support 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.

For the above reasons, we urge you to support this request to pass SJM 2 and urge Congress to pass the Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act without delay.

I can tell you without a doubt VOCA funding is vital to deliver life-changing support to survivors.

Sincerely,

Ashley Carson
Executive Director
Center for Hope & Safety