



4110 SE Hawthorne Boulevard #503 | Portland, Oregon 97214
Admin (503) 222-6507 | **24-hour Hotline** (503) 222-6222
We believe that everyone deserves to live a life free from violence.

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

February 8, 2025

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

On behalf of Raphael House of Portland, 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.

Raphael House of Portland is a domestic violence organization that provides safety and support services for survivors of domestic violence and has done so since 1977. Besides providing a confidential emergency shelter we have many wrap around services intended to help survivors establish safety and stability in the wake of violence and abuse. Our high school based prevention education program works upstream in order to prevent abuse from happening in the first place by teaching students and school communities about equitable relationships, consent, prevention and safety when faced with dating and domestic violence.

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.

Specifically at Raphael House, VOCA funds our Youth Programming in shelter, an essential aspect aiding the children who are fleeing with their parent to adjust and recover from the trauma of domestic violence. Additionally, VOCA supports our wrap-around services to survivors. This program provides resources, crisis case-management, housing emergency funds and community building activities to survivors in both shelter and those whom have found safe

and stable housing. This program has proven to help these families maintain their post-shelter housing and begin to build their new lives.

Bipartisan efforts are underway federally to create a long-term solution for the CWF, 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emmy Ritter", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Emmy Ritter, LCSW
Executive Director
Raphael House of Portland