

Submitter: Erin Ritchie  
On Behalf Of: Survivor Services POP 327 and HB 3196  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee  
On Public Safety  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5014

April 16, 2025

Re: Policy Option Package 327 and HB 3196

Co-Chairs Broadman and Evans, and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee On Public Safety,

I urge you to pass two pieces of legislation. The first is the Department of Justice Budget POP# 327 that will provide ongoing funding to stabilize critical survivor services programs (\$22M). This will maintain the same funding levels as in past years to ensure survivors of interpersonal violence can access the support they need and deserve, including crisis intervention, emergency shelter, safety planning, and advocacy.

The second is HB 3196, which will backfill VOCA funding (\$18.5M). Federal legislators are actively working on a sustainable fix for VOCA (H.R. 909), which has bipartisan support and, at last count, 148 co-sponsors. This one-time investment will ensure that when crime victims turn to agencies and systems providers for support, help will be there.

In my work supporting survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking, I have sat in rooms with survivors who just experienced one of the most traumatic events of their lives and are fleeing to find safety for themselves and their children. After such traumatic experiences, services the domestic violence and sexual assault agencies provide are crucial and lifesaving. As an advocate, I have sat with survivors in hospital rooms receiving invasive exams, witnessed survivors find safety in confidential shelters, and spent hours chatting with survivors as we drive them to a shelter across the state because the level of danger they were in was so high that they could no longer stay in their community. Without these services, survivors will remain in danger, families will go without resources, and people will continue to experience great harm.

I urge you to vote in favor of POP# 327 and HB 3196. These funds are crucial for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Thank you for your support and the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Erin Ritchie