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Assembly
California Legislature



March 8, 2024

Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblymember James Ramos, Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 6
1021 O Street, Suite 8310
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairs Gabriel and Ramos,

We, the undersigned members, write in support of funding to address an anticipated \$700 million cut to the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) fund. Specifically, we are supportive of \$200 million in ongoing funding to prevent these federal cuts from affecting survivors of crime, and to ensure the ongoing stability to crime services in the state. While ongoing funding is the need, at minimum these funds must be allocated for this coming fiscal year to prevent immediate and drastic cuts to crime victim services and provide time for a longer-term solution at the state or federal level to be established. Without some level of support, California's victim service providers are at risk of devastating funding cuts that in some instances may require programs to close their doors all together.

VOCA is at the center of California's response to supporting victims of crime and these cuts will impact programs serving survivors of child abuse, elder abuse, human trafficking, domestic violence, sexual assault, among others.

The impacted organizations provide counseling, housing services, crisis response, and direct legal services, along with a range of other responses to address trauma and support their healing. Programs may need to lay off staff, services may be scaled back, wait times may be increased to connect victims of crime to valuable services, and more if this funding gap is not addressed. The impacts of these cuts will fall hardest on smaller programs, communities that have been historically underserved, and rural programs. For survivors, this will reduce their ability to access the support they need and deserve.

As just a small sample of the services that VOCA makes possible in California, in FY 21-22, these funds supported:

- A range of housing options for domestic violence survivors and their children, including 354,227 emergency shelter nights provided, with another 15,706 unmet requests for shelter during the year; providing transitional housing 180,628 times; and supporting another 6,882 individuals with housing services through a Housing First approach to connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness quickly and successfully to permanent housing.
- Services for 46,461 individuals experiencing sexual violence, served by California's Rape Crisis Centers.
- Culturally appropriate victim services for 42,184 unserved/underserved survivors of crime, and another 4,333 child and youth survivors of crime from unserved/underserved communities, and 866 culturally-rooted therapy sessions provided to Native American children victimized by abuse and/or neglect.
- 15,156 elder abuse victims receiving comprehensive services
- Supporting child abuse and neglect survivors, including 1,133 individual counseling sessions provided to children who are victims of sexual abuse and/or sexual exploitation; 8,649 foster youth provided advocacy or accompaniment through the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Programs; 14,732 children victimized by abuse and/or neglect
- 1,138 human trafficking survivors received comprehensive services.
- Providing information about the criminal justice process to 275,270 people.

These cuts will go into effect Fiscal Year 24-25, giving the Administration and Legislature time to include funding in the state budget to backfill the federal reduction and limit reduction to services for crime survivors. Now is the time for California to invest in measures to support survivors of crime.

Sincerely,



Assemblymember Eloise Gomez
Reye50th Assembly District



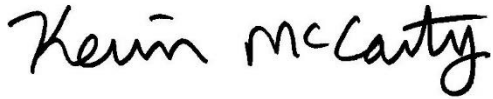
Assemblymember Laura Friedman
44th Assembly District



Assemblymember Mike Gipson
65th Assembly District



Assemblymember Ash Kalra
25th Assembly District



Assemblymember Kevin McCarty
6th Assembly District



Assemblymember Juan Alanis
22nd Assembly District



Assemblymember Stephanie Nguyen
10th Assembly District



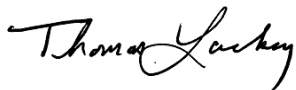
Assemblymember Blanca Rubio
48th Assembly District



Assemblymember Greg Wallis
47th Assembly District



Assemblymember Marie Waldron
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