

Senator Mike Enzi  
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Bernard Sanders  
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Tom Price  
207 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Chris Van Hollen  
1707 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

April 24, 2015

Dear Senators Enzi and Sanders and Congressmen Price and Van Hollen:

We, the undersigned organizations, ask you to include a provision in the final Budget Resolution to ensure adequate sums are disbursed from the Crime Victims Fund while protecting a robust fund for the future.

As organizations representing direct victim service providers, law enforcement officers and prosecutors, who work with victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, elder abuse, trafficking, drunk driving, homicide and other crimes, we see firsthand the devastating effects these crimes have on both the victims and the communities in which they live. For victims to truly heal, it is critical they have access to needed crisis and recovery services, many of which are made available because of funding provided by the Crime Victims Fund.

Congress created the Crime Victims Fund in 1984 based on a simple idea: money the government collects from those who commit crimes should be used to help those victimized by crime. Each year, criminal fines and penalties collected in federal court are deposited into the Crime Victims Fund. The Department of Justice disburses money from this Fund to States and other entities to support victim compensation and assistance programs. It is important to note that the Fund receives no tax dollars.

In 2000, Congress passed a law capping disbursements from the Crime Victims Fund. The original intent was to prevent fluctuations in disbursements. However, since that time, the caps have been set too low to meet the needs of victims; deposits have skyrocketed while disbursements have remained almost flat. For example, from fiscal year 2010 through fiscal year 2014, \$12 billion was deposited into the fund, but only \$3.6 billion was disbursed. The remainder of that money remained in the fund to be used as a budget offset. DOJ projects that in fiscal year 2016, the offset from the Crime Victims Fund will be approximately \$13.5 billion.

We were very pleased when Congress raised the cap for fiscal year 2015 to over \$2.3 billion. We would like to build upon this progress and ensure that disbursed funds keep pace with deposits in order to meet the needs of victims of crime.

We also support legislation providing a consistent funding stream with fewer fluctuations by requiring the Department of Justice to disburse from the Fund the average of the past 3 years' intake—an estimated \$2.6 billion for fiscal year 2016.

Senator Toomey (R-PA) has drafted language that creates this funding mechanism, creates a tribal funding stream and makes other necessary improvements to the Victims of Crime Act.

Such a change would help close the gap between desperate need and available resources – allowing many more victims to receive needed and life-saving services. We urge members of the House and Senate Budget Committees to include a provision to ensure an enhanced, predictable stream of funding from the Crime Victims Fund. If you have any questions, please contact Rachel Graber at rgraber@ncadv or (202) 467-8714.

Sincerely,

Association of Prosecuting Attorneys  
Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association  
Futures Without Violence  
Justice Fellowship/ Prison Fellowship Ministries  
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence  
National Association of Police Organizations  
National Association of Victim Assistance Administrators  
National Children's Alliance  
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
National District Attorneys Association  
National Domestic Violence Hotline  
National Center for Victims of Crime  
National Congress of American Indians  
National Network to End Domestic Violence  
Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape  
Rape Abuse and Incest National Network