

## Urgent Legislative Fix to Sustain VOCA and Preserve Victim Services

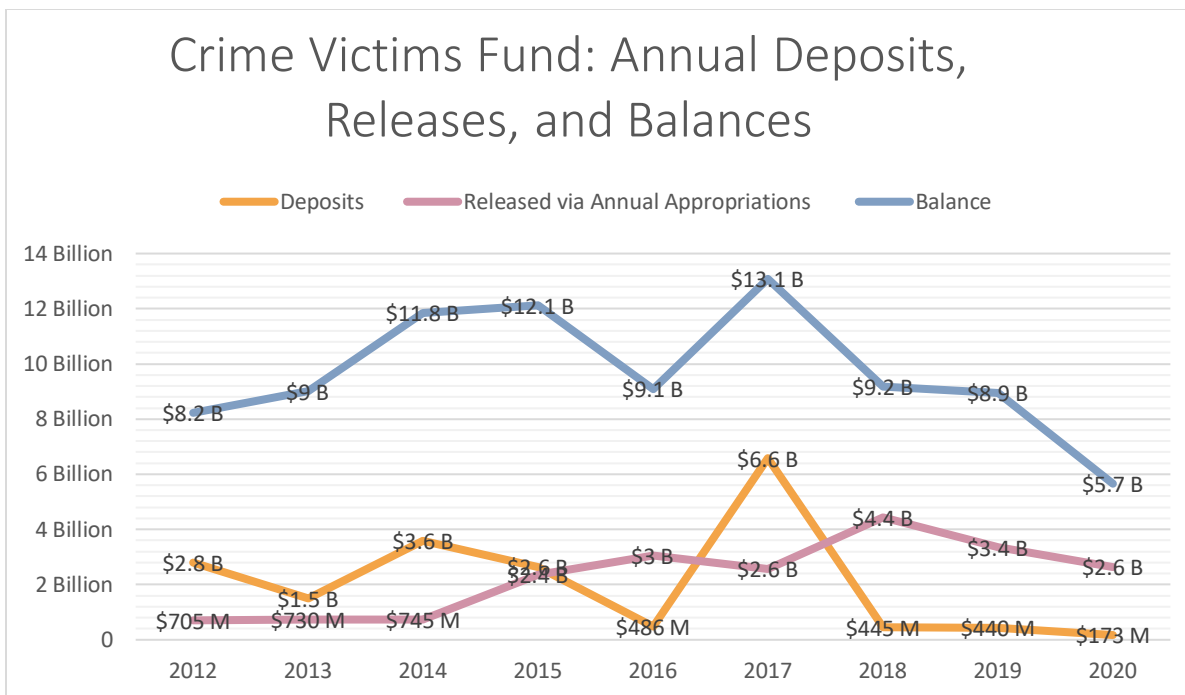
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The National Network to End Domestic Violence urges Congress to act quickly to save Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding by amending the law to deposit penalties and fines from non-prosecution and deferred prosecution agreements into the Crime Victims Fund (CVF).

- ★ Over 6,000 local organizations rely on funds from VOCA to provide lifesaving direct services to victims of all types of crime annually. Without VOCA funds, many victim service programs would cease to exist, leaving survivors and victims with nowhere to turn.
- ★ Recent declining deposits into VOCA's non-taxpayer funding source – the CVF – threaten to drastically reduce VOCA funding.

### Background

- ★ The CVF is funded entirely from criminal fines arising from federal convictions, not taxpayer funds. Congress releases VOCA funding from the CVF annually, through the Appropriations process.
- ★ In federal Fiscal Years 2015-2018, Congress released substantially larger sums from the CVF. This funding assists millions of victims of crime each year.
- ★ However, recently the VOCA funds released annually have begun to decline because of shrinking deposits and subsequent declines in the CVF balance. The declines are due to prosecutorial strategies that have changed over the course of the last decade, and are not a partisan issue.
- ★ When deposits into the CVF are reduced, the amount allocated to states for victim services is reduced. As state and local budget cuts loom on the horizon, it is more important than ever to sustain VOCA. If VOCA is not sustained, victim service providers will lose critical funds and have to close or reduce services.



**Why are deposits into the CVF shrinking?**

- ★ DOJ has increased its use of deferred and non-prosecution agreements, many of which require payment of large monetary penalties. These agreements are not technically criminal convictions, so they are not deposited into the CVF.
- ★ The underlying basis for these agreements, however, are violations of federal criminal law, making these payments the functional equivalent of criminal fines. In 2018 alone, DOJ [collected billions of dollars](#) that could have been deposited into the CVF but were not, due to the type of agreement used.

**A no-cost, urgent legislative fix**

- ★ Congress must amend the VOCA statute to direct penalties and fines from non-prosecution and deferred prosecution agreements into the CVF.
- ★ With no burden to taxpayers, the CVF would be sustained.
- ★ The House-passed HEROES Act includes this fix. We urge the Senate to include this urgently needed fix in the next federal COVID-19 relief package.

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