



Honorable Member
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

June 22, 2021

Dear Senator:

The organizations below, comprising the national VOCA stakeholder workgroup, are writing today to urge the Senate to immediately pass the House-passed H.R.1652, the *VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021* (“VOCA Fix Act”), without amendments or changes. The bipartisan and bicameral *VOCA Fix Act*, introduced in the Senate as S. 611 by Senators Durbin, Graham, Baldwin, Grassley, Feinstein, Cornyn, Klobuchar, and Murkowski, has 58 sponsors and is a narrowly-focused, carefully negotiated bill to address an immediate crisis - massive cuts to Victim of Crime Act (“VOCA”) victim service grants and insufficient funding for victim compensation.

We were heartened when Senator Durbin asked for the Senate’s unanimous consent to pass the *VOCA Fix Act* last week and by Senator Murkowski’s passionate words about the importance of the legislation. However, we were disheartened by an objection, based on false premises, that kept this vital bill from becoming law. We are writing to correct the record and impress upon you the importance of passing the *VOCA Fix Act* immediately, without delay or objection, and without amendments.

During floor remarks for the unanimous consent, it was represented that the *VOCA Fix Act* fails to correct certain structural issues that prevent the funds from reaching victims and their advocates. The premise of this statement - that these structural issues impact the distribution of VOCA funds to survivors and advocates - is not accurate. While the use of CHIMPS (Changes in Mandatory Programs) as budget offsets continues to be a contentious issue, the claim that Appropriators hoard money rather than releasing it to victim service providers is false. In reality, Appropriators have substantially decreased the size of the budget offset by releasing far more than the amount required by the proposed substitute, and the proposed substitute intended to restructure the entire appropriations process is incredibly controversial - whereas the *VOCA Fix Act* is not.

While we wait for passage, more than 1,710 victim advocacy groups nationwide who have endorsed this bill have watched criminal settlements totaling more than \$545 million deposited into the General Fund rather than into the Crime Victims Fund this calendar year, because this technical fix has not passed. These funds would have funded rape crisis centers, children's advocacy centers, domestic violence shelters, and many other organizations currently facing serious budgetary crises, and would have added to funds available to compensate victims for their losses. Yet, because of a complex, cryptic policy debate about esoteric budget processes and CHIMPS, the *VOCA Fix Act* has not been signed into law. Regardless of the merits of this budget process debate, it should not be held on the backs of crime victims.

Over the past year-and-a-half, there has been a groundswell of support for this important, narrowly focused legislation, including [all 56 state and territory attorneys general](#) and more than [1,710 local, tribal, state, regional, and national advocacy organizations](#) and government agencies. There is no more important piece of victim rights legislation before the United States Senate at this moment. In our [letter on May 8](#), we urged passage of this bill immediately without any amendments, including controversial proposals that impact the appropriations process. We must again ask for immediate passage and urge, in the strongest terms, all Senators to support the bill as passed by the House.

As stated above, the *VOCA Fix Act* is a narrowly tailored, carefully negotiated technical fix bill to address the immediate needs of survivors, and the Senate must act now to pass this critical legislation without any amendments. On behalf of a broad and committed group of national, regional, state, Tribal, and local stakeholders, we urge the Senate to move forward with a clean bill free from any amendments. Every delay allows any new potential funds that should be deposited into the Crime Victims Fund to instead be deposited into the General Treasury. The House passed the *VOCA Fix Act* more than three months ago with overwhelming bipartisan support; we urge the Senate to similarly pass the House-passed *VOCA Fix Act*, as is, immediately.

For more information, contact Denise Edwards (dedwards@nca-online.org), Rachel Graber (rgraber@ncadv.org), Terri Poore (terri@endsexualviolence.org), Monica McLaughlin (mmclaughlin@nnev.org), Daisy Pagan (daisy@navaa.org), and Dan Eddy (dan.eddy@nacvcb.org).

Respectfully,

Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities

Futures Without Violence

Mothers Against Drunk Driving

National Alliance to End Sexual Violence

National Association of Attorneys General

National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards

National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators

National Children's Alliance

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

National Criminal Justice Association

National District Attorneys Association

National Network to End Domestic Violence

Ujima Inc., The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community