



November 5, 2015

The Honorable Richard Neal  
341 Cannon House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James McGovern  
438 Cannon House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Niki Tsongas  
1714 Longworth House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
306 Cannon House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Katherine Clark  
1721 Longworth House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Seth Moulton  
1408 Longworth House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Capuano  
1414 Longworth House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Stephen Lynch  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable William Keating  
315 Cannon House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: **The Crime Victims Fund (CVF) FY 2016 Spending**

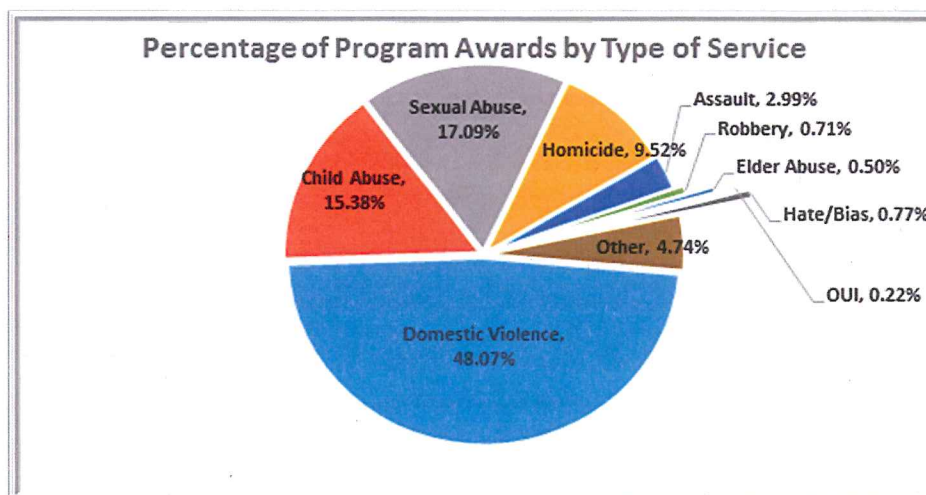
Dear Massachusetts Congressional Delegation Members:

I write to express concern regarding the recently released budget agreement that eliminates \$1.5 billion permanently from the **Crime Victims Fund (CVF)**. This action removes funding that was dedicated to direct victim services and sets a dangerous precedent that the CVF may be targeted in future budgets - placing sustainable funding in jeopardy for these lifesaving services. The CVF was created by the U.S. Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) over 30 years ago to provide free services and financial compensation to victims of crime. The Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA) is the Commonwealth's administrator of VOCA funding which supports \$12.9 million in programming that serve 65,000 residents throughout Massachusetts annually. I strongly urge you and your colleagues to **maintain a \$2.6 billion cap for crime victim services in the FY 2016 appropriation and reject any future attempt to use these essential funds for any other purpose.**

The CVF is derived from fines paid by criminals convicted of federal crimes and not from U.S. taxpayer dollars, making it a unique and sustainable funding source for the short and long-term recovery needs of crime victims and their families. In an effort to maintain consistent amounts in the Fund, Congress traditionally caps CVF annual spending which is then distributed by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) to VOCA Administrators throughout the country. In Massachusetts, this funding supports 107 free victim service programs based in community non-profit, state, and municipal agencies in every county in the state.

Attorney General Maura T. Healey, Chair • Liam T. Lowney, Executive Director  
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The services and supports funded via VOCA range greatly in Massachusetts to meet the diverse needs of those impacted by crime. Traditionally, MOVA funds services that reflect the following crime types and allocates VOCA funding respectively:



Last year's CVF cap of \$2.4 billion nearly doubled the amount of funding received by victim service programs in Massachusetts. To ensure effective use of this increase, we conducted a statewide needs assessment to inform funding decisions that bolstered existing services and established new services for underserved victim populations like the LGBTQ, immigrant, and non-English speaking communities (further information on these efforts can be found at [www.mass.gov/mova](http://www.mass.gov/mova)). Some notable achievements from last year's increase include:

- VOCA awards increased from \$6.5 million to \$12.9 million;
- VOCA funded programs increased from 71 to 107 programs – increasing access for victims to free services across the state;
- \$520,000 was directed to establish new and specialized human trafficking victim services;
- An additional \$337,000 bolstered existing civil legal advocacy services;
- Over \$233,000 created new LGBTQ specific victim services;
- Trauma-informed violence recovery services were increased by \$616,000 to respond to increases in community violence statewide;
- \$278,000 in new funding was directed toward specialized child sexual abuse services; and
- Court-based domestic violence advocacy services were expanded in 5 additional courts to now cover 36 district courts and 14 probate and family courts in 10 counties.

**A lack of consistency in the CVF annual cap and reallocating CVF dollars for unrelated purposes will undoubtedly have profound impacts on our ability to continue to address these needs in Massachusetts.** Inevitably, service positions and programming will have to be reduced and/or eliminated – resulting in a dangerous lack of access to these life-saving services for victims and their families. The use of CVF monies for other purposes sets a dangerous precedent and could lead to the depletion of a fund intended to serve crime victims and their families. This fund has served millions of victims nationally over the past 30 years – and for this to continue it is critical that policymakers uphold the intent of the enabling VOCA statute to maintain these funds for this specific purpose.

42 USC 10601 (c)

RETENTION OF SUMS IN FUND; AVAILABILITY FOR EXPENDITURE WITHOUT FISCAL YEAR LIMITATION

Sums deposited in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be available for expenditure under this chapter for grants under this chapter without fiscal year limitation. Notwithstanding subsection (d)(5) of this section, all sums deposited in the Fund in any fiscal year shall remain in the Fund for obligation in future fiscal years, without fiscal year limitation.

Thank you in advance for your continued support and leadership in preserving these critical services. **Please adopt a \$2.6 billion cap on VOCA and reject any attempt to use these funds for anything other than supporting crime victims.** If you have any questions about the important services offered in your district with these funds, please don't hesitate to contact me. The programming supported by the CVF saves lives, rebuilds families, and prevents future crimes – all at no cost to U.S. taxpayers. Please help us continue to support crime victims in Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Liam T. Lowney", with a stylized, flowing script.

Liam T. Lowney  
Executive Director

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