



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
SACRAMENTO LEGISLATIVE OFFICE

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March 4, 2024

The Honorable Kevin McCarty
Assembly Public Safety Committee, Chair
1020 N Street, Room 111
Sacramento, CA 95814

ASSEMBLY BILL 1956 (REYES)
SUPPORT
Assembly Public Safety Committee
Hearing Date: March 12, 2024

Dear Assembly Member McCarty:

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office is pleased to support Assembly Bill 1956 (Reyes).

AB 1956 would require the State of California to allocate funds to prioritize continuity and stability of crime victim services when federal funding provided by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) is reduced by more than 10% of the amount awarded the prior year. AB 1956 would also require the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services to regularly consult, collaborate with, and consider the recommendations regarding allocation of funding from the VOCA Steering Committee to ensure a consolidated and streamlined grant distribution process.

In 2023, the federal government appropriated \$1.9 billion for the VOCA's Crime Victims Fund (CVF). The current House and Senate budget proposals only fund the VCF at \$1.2 billion. This significant reduction in federal funding is expected to result in a significant reduction to California's VOCA Victim Assistance Formula Grant Program. The California Office of Emergency Services projects that California's allocation will be between \$105.8 million and \$131.1 million for federal fiscal year 2024, which is a \$22.7 to \$48 million reduction from federal fiscal year 2023.

Funding from the CVF provides the largest consistent funding source for support to Californians who have been victims of crime. VOCA provides funds for an array of critical services and programs, which include domestic violence service providers, Rape Crisis Centers, legal assistance, human trafficking services, services to address crime survivor homelessness, and other vital services.

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A reduction to California's VOCA funding will have a detrimental impact on the ability of Los Angeles County's provider network to provide domestic violence shelter/housing, legal and other services for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking.

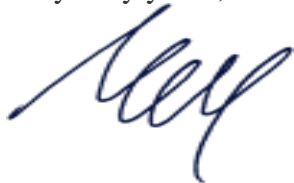
Our Bureau of Victim Services will also be directly impacted by the upcoming reduction in California's VOCA funding. Without additional funding the Bureau of Victim Services could lose funding for approximately 20 Victim Services Representatives. Victim services representatives provide a range of free services to help victims become survivors. They work in courthouses and police stations and are available to provide assistance in several languages. Program services are provided free of charge and there is no legal residency or citizenship requirement. Victim services representatives work in coordination with deputy district attorneys and are specially trained to help children, seniors, people with disabilities and victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and other violent crime.

Our Office is deeply concerned that cuts in VOCA CVF funding will have devastating impacts to crime survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking and other violent crimes and their families.

For these reasons our Office strongly supports Assembly Bill 1956 and respectfully requests your AYE vote.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Daniel Felizatto in my Sacramento Legislative Office at (916) 442-0668.

Very truly yours,



GEORGE GASCÓN
District Attorney

cc: Assembly Member Reyes
Counsel, Assembly Public Safety Committee
Gary Olson, Assembly Republican Caucus