



# State Coalition Talking Points VAWA, FVPSA and VOCA Appropriations FY 2009

## Thanks for Past Support and Full Funding Request

- **Thanks to Congress' commitment to helping victims of domestic and sexual violence by funding VAWA and FVPSA, domestic violence programs have positively impacted millions of individuals and families.**
- We know that these programs are a good investment – they save lives and money. Since VAWA first passed in 1994:
  - Significantly more victims report domestic violence to the police;
  - The rate of non-fatal intimate partner violence against women has decreased by 63%;
  - The number of individuals killed by an intimate partner has decreased dramatically – 24% for women and 48% for men; and
  - VAWA '94 saved taxpayers at least \$14.8 billion in net averted social costs in its first 6 years alone.
- What may surprise you is that due to the successes of these programs and the improved response of the criminal justice system, **more victims are seeking help than ever before.** In just one day in 2007, over 53,000 victims of domestic violence were served in programs across the country. ***Use your state census information here.***
- **This increase in demand cannot be met by the current levels of funding.** On the same day in 2007, due to a lack of resources, programs were unable to serve over 7,700 victims. ***Use your state census information here.***
- Despite a tough budget last year, **Congress increased VAWA programs by \$17.3 million total for FY 2008!** To pass a spending bill however, Congress was forced to make cuts to some vital VAWA programs, including FVPSA.
- In order to continue the progress of VAWA and FVPSA and to meet the growing demand for services, Congress should invest in ending domestic violence by supporting these successful and cost-effective programs. While we recognize the fiscal restraint required in this year's tight budget we know that **modest funding increases in VAWA and FVPSA are sound investments in our nation's health and safety.**

## Labor/Health and Human Services (L/HHS) Budget: FVPSA and DELTA

- The **Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA)** funds essential services that are at the core of our nation's work to end domestic violence: life-saving emergency shelters, crisis lines, advocacy, counseling and comprehensive victim assistance. Research shows that staying at a shelter or working with a domestic violence advocate significantly reduced the likelihood that a victim would be abused again and improved the victim's quality of life. ***Talk about the need for emergency shelter in your community/state and use your state census information here.***
- **FVPSA FUNDING:** FVPSA programs and shelters only received \$122.6 million in FY '08 – over \$50 million below the authorized level. **FVPSA needs full funding at \$175 million in FY '09** to meet increased demand for emergency services.

- **FVPSA REAUTHORIZATION:** In addition to FVPSA funding, FVPSA reauthorization is a particular priority for us right now because FVPSA expires this year. FVPSA has been extremely successful – the real problem is that it has never been fully funded. But it was written in 1984 and needs to be updated to reflect current best practices.
- A reauthorization bill should primarily continue and enhance emergency shelters, which are at the core of our response to domestic violence:
  - Victims from marginalized racial, ethnic and religious populations may not feel safe reaching out for help beyond their communities. **Give an example of how victims from underserved communities may face barriers to accessing shelter or leaving abuse relationships in your state.**
    - In response, FVPSA reauthorization should dedicate a percent of funding from formula grants to **meet the culturally-specific needs of underserved communities**, including racial and ethnic minorities.
    - It should also create a small pilot program to develop and thoroughly evaluate prevention and intervention programs for all underserved communities so we can create solutions and learn from them nationwide.
- Children make up one-half to two-thirds of the residents of domestic violence shelters but we often lack the staff to address their specific needs. **Give an example of children’s needs when they enter shelter.**
  - **FVPSA reauthorization should enhance and expand children’s services** and define the set-aside of funding dedicated to children’s services. If Congress appropriates over \$130 million for FVPSA, this set-aside for children’s funding will kick-in.
- The **Community Initiatives to Prevent Abuse (DELTA) program** is another program that needs to be reauthorized with FVPSA. It uses innovative strategies to prevent domestic violence before it starts.
- Preventing domestic violence before it starts is one of the most cost-effective and efficient ways of addressing the problem of pervasive violence and its lasting impacts.
- **Fully funding the Community Initiatives to Prevent Abuse (DELTA) program at \$6 million will help prevent domestic violence and its costs to communities. If you are a DELTA state, explain the positive outcomes of your DELTA projects. If not, what would you do with prevention funding?**
- *Note: If you want to talk about RPE or PHHSBG, you can mention them here.*

Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Budget: STOP, LAV, Rural, Transitional Housing

- The **STOP (Service, Training, Officers, Prosecutors) Grant Program** funds coordinated community responses supporting police officers, prosecutors, courts, and victim services; they have been found to significantly reduce domestic violence rates and homicides. STOP is the largest source of funding for states to combat domestic and sexual violence. **Give an example from your state.**
- **To ensure that funding cuts do not reverse the progress we have made toward ending domestic and sexual violence, STOP Grants should be fully funded at \$225 million in FY ‘09 with no earmarks.**
- The **Legal Assistance for Victims (LAV)** grants provide much-needed funding to help victims of domestic violence secure protection orders, keep their children safe and navigate the criminal justice system. Despite the growing need for LAV services, it was cut by \$2.1 million in the FY ‘08 budget. LAV should be **fully funded at \$65 million. Talk about the need for legal assistance in your state.**

- The **Rural Grant program** is one of the only sources of funding for services and developing community responses in some of the most under-resourced areas of the country.
- Victims of domestic and sexual violence in rural and remote communities face unique obstacles in their efforts to find safety including isolation, lack of transportation, high fuel costs, and extreme distance from services. ***Talk about a success OR an unmet need in your state.***
- **Fully funding the Rural Grant Program at \$55 million will protect critical services and meet the overwhelming needs of victims in rural areas.**
- **Transitional Housing Grants** help victims rebuild their lives after fleeing a violent situation. Housing is an urgent need for victims in our state and one of the main reasons domestic violence shelters are consistently full. ***Talk about housing needs in your community/state.***
- **Fully funding this crucial program at \$40 million will provide a bridge from crisis to stability for victims in life-threatening situations.**
- *Note: If you want to talk about SASP, you could mention it here.*

### **The Victims of Crime Act Fund (VOCA) in the CJS budget**

- Now, I would like to talk to you about something completely separate from VAWA . . . The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA).
- The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) is a key funding source for services that help victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, and other offenses cope with the trauma and aftermath of crime.
- This fund **does not come from taxpayer money** but rather consists of fines and penalties collected from federal offenders.
- Each year Congress sets a “cap” to determine the annual distribution of money to states out of the fund.
- In FY ‘08, the VOCA Fund cap was **cut by a devastating \$35 million** and the FY ‘09 President’s Budget proposes canceling the balance of the VOCA fund. ***Talk about how important VOCA funding is to provide essential, lifesaving direct services to victims in your community.***
- We are asking Congress to raise the VOCA cap to \$717 to meet the growing demand for VOCA funded services. This would restore state victim assistance grants to their FY ‘06 levels. Congress must also protect the balance of the VOCA Fund for future generations.

### **NOTES:**

*If Congressional staff have more questions, they can contact Monica McLaughlin, Public Policy Specialist, National Network to End Domestic Violence, at 202.543.5566 or mmclaughlin@nnev.org.*

# Local Program Talking Points

## VAWA, FVPSA and VOCA

### Appropriations FY 2009

Use these talking points when you make lobby visits to members of Congress to outline our request for full funding for all Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) programs, and to raise the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund cap in the FY '09 Congressional Budget.

#### TELLING YOUR STORY

By sharing the needs in your community and the difficulties you face meeting those needs, you paint a picture of the critical need for full funding of VAWA, FVPSA and VOCA. Your story is the most important message you share with a Member of Congress.

**Talk about how domestic violence affects your community.**

- **What progress have you seen due to VAWA, FVPSA and VOCA funding?**
- **What gaps still exist?**
- **Do you see demand for victim services increasing?**
- **What resources are needed in your community?**
- **Do you have a story you'd like to share?**

**As you describe the needs, there are specific funding streams that you can mention would help fill the gaps.**

- **Core shelter services → FVPSA/Battered Women's Shelters and VOCA funding, FVPSA reauthorization**
- **Affordable housing → Transitional Housing (VAWA)**
- **Coordination with police, judges, prosecutors → STOP Grants (VAWA)**
- **Legal services, such as protection orders, custody and divorce, and other civil legal representation → Legal Assistance for Victims (VAWA)**
- **Outreach and services in rural areas → Rural Grants Program (VAWA), VOCA**
- **Primary prevention programs → DELTA Grants, FVPSA reauthorization**

#### KEY POINTS

- Thank you for supporting programs dedicated to ending violence against women.
- VAWA, FVPSA, and the VOCA Fund support lifesaving programs that have been at the core of our community's response to domestic and sexual violence for over a decade.
- Due to the successes of VAWA, FVPSA and VOCA programs and the improved response of the criminal justice system, more victims are seeking help than ever before.
- **Tell your story (see sidebar).**
- VAWA, FVPSA and VOCA programs are a good investment – they save lives and money. VAWA '94 saved taxpayers at least \$14.8 billion in net averted social costs in its first 6 years. VOCA uses no taxpayer money!

**Ending domestic and sexual violence by supporting these successful and cost-effective programs must be a priority. Reauthorizing FVPSA, increasing funding for VAWA and FVPSA, and raising the VOCA cap will save lives and prevent many other social problems.**

*If Congressional staff have more questions, they can contact Monica McLaughlin, Public Policy Specialist, National Network to End Domestic Violence, at 202-543-5566 or [mmclaughlin@nnedv.org](mailto:mmclaughlin@nnedv.org).*