

National Crime Victim Organizations Contact Group

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November 13, 2007

The Honorable Rob Portman  
Director, Office of Management and Budget  
Executive Office of the President  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Portman:

We are writing on behalf of the millions of victims of crime in the United States who receive critical services that help them recover from the physical, financial, emotional, and spiritual consequences of criminal activity.

In 1984, Congress and President Reagan joined in a bipartisan spirit to pledge the use of federal criminal fines and special assessments to support victim services through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). Ever since that historic occasion, the federal government has kept this pledge by retaining all amounts deposited into the Crime Victims Fund by criminal offenders—*not taxpayers*—for the exclusive support of crime victim services. Thanks to the Crime Victims Fund more than 4,400 victim assistance agencies and crime victim compensation programs in every State provide essential services to victims of all types of crimes, including domestic violence, sexual assault, homicide, drunk driving, child abuse and international and domestic terrorism.

In FY 2000, because of fluctuating deposits into the Crime Victims Fund, Congress began delaying obligations from the Fund “to protect against wide fluctuations in receipts into the Fund, *and to ensure that a stable level of funding will remain available for these programs in future years.*” This commitment has been reiterated in both Appropriations bills and amendments to the authorizing statute.

Unfortunately, the past two federal budget proposals submitted by the Administration have sought to renege on this pledge by rescinding some \$1.3 billion in the Crime Victims Fund.

At no time has there been so much as one vote cast in any Committee or on the floor in either chamber of Congress in favor of the Administration’s attempt to rescind the balance in the Crime Victims Fund.

An analysis of Fund deposits demonstrates that *all* amounts retained in the Fund are essential to meeting the stable annual funding obligations set by Congress. In at least three of the past eight years, annual Fund deposits were less than the amounts deposited into the Fund, thereby necessitating a drawdown of the amounts retained Fund balance—the funds that the Administration has sought to transfer out of the Fund. And OMB’s own budget projections show that anticipated Fund deposits are likely to be less than annual caps on obligations.

As Attorney General Gonzales testified during the July 18, 2006 Senate Judiciary Committee's Department of Justice oversight hearings, it is time to increase the annual cap on VOCA obligations in order to better meet the needs of our nation's crime victims. Had the Administration's attempts to empty the Fund succeeded, there would have been *no money in the Fund* for *any* victim services, let alone an amount sufficient to raise—or, for that matter, even maintain—the annual cap!

The signers of this letter represent an unprecedented coalition of crime victims, national victim advocacy organizations, state and local victim service providers, criminal justice professionals and many others. We respectfully request that the Administration, as part of its FY 2008 budget proposal, no longer seek to empty the Crime Victims Fund and to work cooperatively with us to ensure—at no cost to taxpayers—the availability of the resources essential to meeting the needs of crime victims.

Sincerely,

American Parole and Probation  
Association and its local affiliated  
agencies.

American Society of Victimology

International Community Corrections  
Association

Justice Solutions, Inc.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving

National Alliance to End Sexual  
Violence

National Association of Crime Victim  
Compensation Boards

National Association of VOCA  
Assistance Administrators

National Center for Victims of Crime

National Children's Alliance

National Coalition Against Domestic  
Violence

National Crime Victim Research and  
Treatment Center

National Judicial College

National Network to End Domestic  
Violence

National Organization for Victim  
Assistance

National Organization of Parents of  
Murdered Children

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape

Security on Campus, Inc.

Stop Family Violence

The National Grange

Victims' Assistance Legal Organization