



## Opinion :: Letters

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4 comment(s)

### Editor's Mailbag

#### Don't cut VAWA, VOCA funding

By MARY J. INGHAM, Mason City

President Bush's FY2009 budget request deals a devastating blow to victims of crime by proposing to cut \$120 million from life-saving domestic violence services created by the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

VAWA has been proven to save millions of lives and more than \$15 billion in health care, law enforcement and other social costs.

In addition to cutting VAWA funding by one-third, the president's plan eliminates the \$2 billion balance in the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund. The VOCA fund, a non-taxpayer resource, is supported entirely through fines and penalties collected from convicted criminals.

The VOCA Fund has made it possible for domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse victims to receive critical support. It also has been used to provide counseling services to victims of terrorism and mass violence, including \$68.1 million to support the victims of the Sept. 11 terrorism attacks.

Eliminating the VOCA fund is an insult and injustice to all victims of crime across the nation.

Locally, VOCA and VAWA funds comprise 26 percent of the annual revenue used to support essential services at Crisis Intervention Service. CIS is a private, non-profit organization that provides counseling, advocacy, support services and shelter to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking in an eight-county region in north central Iowa.

A decrease or total elimination of VOCA or VAWA funding would have a devastating impact on victims of violent crime in North Iowa.

VAWA and VOCA funding has changed the world for victims that have historically suffered in silence.

If the president's budget cuts remain, victims will not have a place to turn for help and innocent lives will be lost.

Urge Congress to restore VOCA and increase VAWA to levels that will protect

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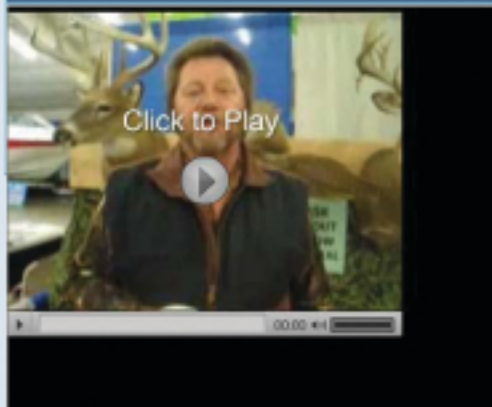
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