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- John Dewey



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Federal Budget Means Less Help for Domestic Violence Victims

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Concord, NH – The new federal budget may mean less help for battered women. Although the budget passed by Congress last week adds \$17 million dollars for programs that include transitional shelters and sexual assault services, it also cut \$35 million for programs created by the “Victim of Crime Fund” (VOCA).

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Grace Mattern, of the *New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence*, says the cuts threaten critical services for Granite State women and children.

“This is money that crisis centers across the country rely upon for their basic services—keeping a shelter open, keeping a hotline operating. The authorizing legislation of VOCA makes it very clear that this money is to be spent on direct services, and it’s unfair to victims across the country to use this funding for any other purpose.”

Although important programs will have to scramble to find additional funding, Mattern still calls the outcome a partial victory, because it apparently could have been worse. The Bush Administration reportedly wanted to eliminate the entire VOCA fund as part of its proposed spending caps. Womens’ advocates hope to get the funding restored during next year’s budget process.

John Robinson/Chris Thomas, Public News Service - NH

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