

# Editorials

You listened to us, now we want to listen to you! You can read recent Editorials that appeared in our print edition. Post your comments or feedback. Join in a dialogue on issues affecting your community, the nation and the world.

## trust fund tax

EX-IRS Attorney defends payroll tax and trust fund collection cases

## Free Government Grants

Free Government Grants for 2008 Billions Available. Never Repay!

### trust fund tax

Free Tax Return for New Clients Solving your Accounting Problems  
[txmstr.com/FreeTaxReturn](http://txmstr.com/FreeTaxReturn)

### Free Government Grants

Free Government Grants for 2008 Billions Available. Never Repay!  
[Government\\_Grant.FreeGrantsKit.info](http://Government_Grant.FreeGrantsKit.info)

[« Maintenance is key to all infrastructure](#) | [Main](#)

February 01, 2008

## Allocation cutbacks for victims puzzling

The Issue: Congress cuts allocations made from the Crime Victims Fund.

Our Opinion: The agencies that depend on the allocations deserve an explanation.

Agencies such as the Berks County chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Berks Women in Crisis deserve an explanation for why Congress has cut back on the funds allocated to them from the federal Crime Victims Fund.

Congress capped the allocations at \$590 million in the 2008 budget, \$35 million less than last year. It's the second year in a row that allocation cuts have been made.

The reduction has left agencies across the country scrambling for private donations. They also have been forced to cut back on programs and personnel.

Allocations to the Berks County chapter of MADD have been reduced by \$10,000 annually in recent years to \$40,000.

Rebecca Shaver, the executive director of the state office of MADD, said working hours for the victims' advocates have been cut and travel expenses trimmed.

"We're doing more with less," Shaver said. "It reduces services that we're able to provide."

Mary Kay Bernosky, the executive director of Berks Women in Crisis, said her agency's fund allocation in the past three years has shrunk by \$12,000 to \$360,000.

No official explanation for the cuts has been forthcoming.

At least one lawmaker believes the reduction was an attempt by Congress to give the appearance of fiscal restraint, despite the fact that the money in the fund doesn't come from tax revenues but from fines, forfeitures and fees levied against federal-crime violators.

It's all smoke and mirrors as far as Rep. Ted Poe, a Texas Republican, is concerned.

"The number is lower in the budget, so the budget shows a saving, but that's a farce," Poe said.

The lawmaker has introduced a bill that would prohibit Congress from including the fund in the general budget.

Poe's fears that the fund eventually may be used for something other than crime victims is not unfounded. The Bush administration has made several attempts to divert the surplus funds into the Treasury Department's general fund. Congress has thwarted those efforts.

Some advocates of crime victims have suggested that in making across-the-board cuts in the budget, Congress inadvertently included the Crime Victims Fund, forgetting that the money does not come from tax revenues.

That seems to be an effort on the part of the advocates to call attention to the situation without incurring the wrath of the Congress, which holds the purse strings.

What is frustrating for the advocates of crime victims is that there is \$1.7 billion sitting in the fund that has not been allocated.

The fund was established in 1984 and until 2000 the amounts allocated to the agencies depended on what was collected from wrong-doers.

However, in 1999 the fund received money from three huge criminal settlements, including one that put \$500 million into the account. The fund ended the year with \$985 million. As a result Congress capped allocations and reserved the excess to be used in years when contributions to the fund were not as large.

Holding back funds for leaner times is not a bad idea, but the agencies should have some input into how much is kept in reserve.

The reason the fund was created was to provide assistance to crime victims. But as a result of the funding cuts, many people who need the help aren't getting it. That doesn't make sense.

Not only do the agencies who help crime victims deserve an explanation, but so do the victims who are being turned away.

---

Posted by readingeagle at February 1, 2008 06:55 AM

## Comments

### Post a comment

If you have a TypeKey identity, you can [sign in](#) to use it here.

Name:

Email Address:

URL:

Remember Me?  Yes  No

Comments: