



March 4, 2021

Statement of Esta Soler,

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Speedy Passage of VOCA Fix Act, Introduced in House and Senate Today, Is Essential to Fund Life-Saving Services for Survivors of Violence and Abuse

“Programs serving survivors of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse need reliable, adequate funding to do their life-saving work. Unfortunately, funds from the Crime Victims Act have dropped precipitously in recent years. Legislation introduced in both chambers of Congress today would restore that funding, giving local victim services organizations the support they need to do their essential work. We urge both the House and Senate to quickly pass this bipartisan legislation, the VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021.

“People who survive crime and violence often require substantial help to heal and recover, such as counseling and advocacy, forensic exams after a sexual assault, and items such as new locks for their door and windows. In the most tragic cases, VOCA funds can also help pay for funeral costs. The Crime Victims Fund, originally created by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), is one the core federal funding pillars providing services for victims of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse. The Fund is not supported by taxpayer dollars but rather by penalties and fees paid by those who commit crimes that are then used to compensate and provide assistance to those who have been victimized. Under the Trump Administration, receipts to the Fund dropped precipitously, leaving many victim services programs facing large cuts. The COVID crisis has further exacerbated the problem. The legislation introduced today also would ensure that fees paid as a result of certain types of negotiated settlements go into the Fund, helping restore its balances.

“We thank Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), John Cornyn (R-TX), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) for introducing the legislation in the Senate, and Representatives Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), Ann Wagner (R-MO), Mary Gay Scanlon (D-PA), Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), Debbie Dingell (D-MI), and John Moolenaar (R-MI) for introducing it in the House of Representatives. We will work closely with them to support its speedy passage, so President Biden can sign it into law.”

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ABOUT FUTURES WITHOUT VIOLENCE:

For more than 30 years, FUTURES has been providing groundbreaking programs, policies and campaigns that empower individuals and organizations working to end violence against women and children around the world. Striving to reach new audiences and transform social norms, FUTURES trains professionals such as doctors, nurses, judges and athletic coaches on improving responses to violence and abuse. FUTURES also works with advocates, policymakers and others to build sustainable community leadership and educate people everywhere about the importance of respect and healthy relationships.