



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
BILL LOCKYER
ATTORNEY GENERAL

April 12, 2005

Via Facsimile

The California Delegation

Re: Crime Victims Fund

Dear Representative:

I am writing to ask you to reject the Administration's FY 2006 budget proposal to remove more than \$1.2 billion from the Crime Victims Fund.

The Crime Victims Fund (Fund) was hallmark legislation enacted as part of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) twenty years ago to provide essential support for state crime victim compensation programs and direct victim assistance services. All money in the Fund comes from fines, forfeitures and assessments paid by persons convicted of federal crimes. None of these funds come from taxpayer dollars. Congress has repeatedly promised that these offender revenues would be used for victim services. Nevertheless, the Administration is asking to have these funds taken away from victim services and transferred into the General Treasury.

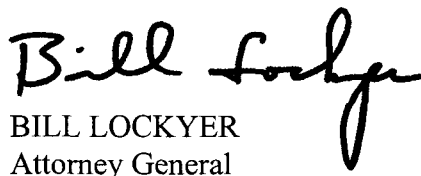
These funds are crucial for California. Ninety percent of each year's Crime Victims Fund allocations go to supplement state funds used to provide direct financial assistance to victims of violent crimes and to support a great variety of direct services, such as domestic abuse shelters, rape crisis centers, child treatment programs, and services to victims and survivors of drunk driving, homicide, elder abuse – indeed all types of criminal victimizations.

In the past six years, the State of California has received a total of more than \$442.5 million dollars in VOCA grants. California has used nearly \$200 million of this for direct financial benefit to crime victims to help cover their uninsured expenses (such as medical costs, mental health counseling, lost wages and support, and funeral and burial costs) through California's Board of Control Victim Compensation Program. The rest has supported other direct services for crime victims as described above. For example, in FY 2002, nearly 240 agencies in California received VOCA sub-grants, including 71 public, mostly criminal-justice agencies (prosecutors, corrections, law enforcement, courts), and 179 private nonprofit agencies and tribal programs.

Because of large deposits into the Fund, in FY 2000 Congress began limiting the annual allocations and in so doing explicitly said that all amounts kept in the Fund would be used to ensure stable funding for these programs in the future. Indeed, Congress amended the underlying authorizing statute (42 U.S.C. § 10601) to reinforce the promise that funds not obligated in a fiscal year would remain available for victim services in subsequent years. The amounts kept in the Fund became a "rainy day" balance that was needed three times to make up the difference between Fund deposits and the annual cap. If this rescission is implemented, there will be no funds for VOCA grants at the beginning of FY 2007.

Wiping out the Crime Victims Fund would be a serious blow to the great progress our Nation has made over the past twenty years in treating crime victims with the fairness, dignity and respect to which they are entitled. I call on you to do all you can to defeat this unwise proposal.

Sincerely,


BILL LOCKYER
Attorney General