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2ND DISTRICT, TEXAS

COMMITTEES
FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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FOUNDER OF CONGRESSIONAL
VICTIM'S RIGHTS CAUCUS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4302

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
430 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: (202) 225-6565
FAX: (202) 225-6547

DISTRICT OFFICES:

HUMBLE
26202 U.S. HIGHWAY 59 NORTH
SUITE 106
HUMBLE, TX 77338
PHONE: (281) 448-0242
FAX: (281) 448-0252

BEAUMONT
505 OULEANS
SUITE 100
BEAUMONT, TX 77701
PHONE: (409) 212-1987
FAX: (409) 212-8711

April 3, 2009

The Honorable Alan Mollohan
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, and Science
House Appropriations Committee
2302 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, and Science
House Appropriations Committee
241 Canon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mollohan and Ranking Member Wolf:

We are greatly appreciative of your subcommittee's efforts in the FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act to take important and positive steps to repair the serious erosion of support for critical services for victims of crime, and especially for your improvements regarding funding for the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) through the Crime Victims Fund.

As you know, the Fund supports a wide range of important services for victims of crime. Some 4,200 agencies provide these services to more than 4 million victims of all types of crime every year, largely through the formula state victim assistance grants. Because of increases in other VOCA-funded program areas and lowered cap, these state grants were cut by nearly \$90 million between 2006 and 2008.

For FY 2009, your committee recommended a significant increase in the annual limit of Fund obligations and recognized the inappropriateness of using the Crime Victims Fund (and other Office of Justice Program grant programs) for OJP management costs. We commend the subcommittee for these two steps that restored two-thirds of the previous reductions in VOCA funding for state victim assistance grants.

As work begins on the FY 2010 appropriations bill, we urge the subcommittee to continue this progress by further reflecting the growing needs for the important services that are supported with VOCA funds. We believe that a FY 2010 cap on Fund obligations of \$705 million would complete the restoration of state assistance grants to the amount received in FY 2006, including inflation, and be a down payment to meet the growing needs of crime victims.

A recent survey of state VOCA victim assistance administrators demonstrates that additional funding is essential. Indeed, according to that survey, a minimum of \$106 million in additional VOCA state victim assistance grants would be necessary to fill the identified gap in funding between requested funding needs and VOCA funds available. Our request for a \$705 million cap in FY 2010 would meet just one-quarter of those additional needs.

We are also aware of the need to ensure that the Crime Victims Fund be able to sustain adequate funding levels for future victim services. Last year, OMB projected that the FY 2009 opening Fund balance would be \$1.9 billion. We also know that based on public announcements of negotiated agreements in a number of Federal criminal cases, deposits into the Fund will increase significantly over the next several years. Thus, the Fund will be assured of maintaining a balance that can ensure adequate, stable support for VOCA victim services.

The original drafters of the VOCA legislation designed the Crime Victims Fund to be a self-sufficient source of support for victim services. Appropriators have consistently explained the purpose of the annual caps on VOCA obligations as a means to ensure a stable source of funding. Our request is consistent with both of these goals.

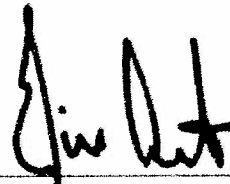
We also need to note that the previous four Presidential budgets sought to rescind the entire balance in the Fund. Congress has properly and resoundingly turned down those requests. Although lacking in details, the FY 2010 budget announced last month suggests that another Fund rescission proposal may in the works. Should that happen, we trust that Congress will again protect the Fund to ensure its continued availability to support victim services.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Rep. Ted Poe
Co-Chair, Victims' Rights Caucus



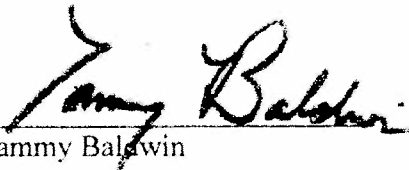
Rep. Jim Costa
Co-Chair, Victims' Rights Caucus



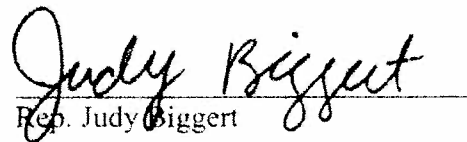
Rep. Neil Abercrombie



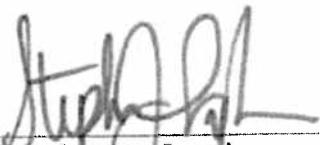
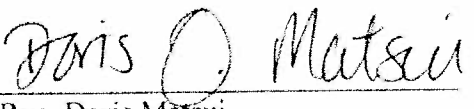
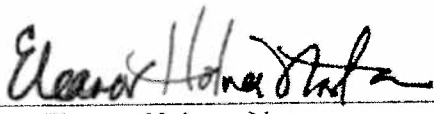
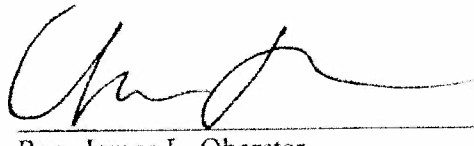
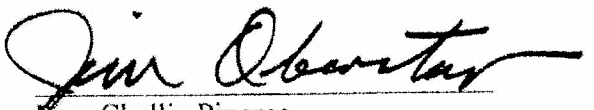

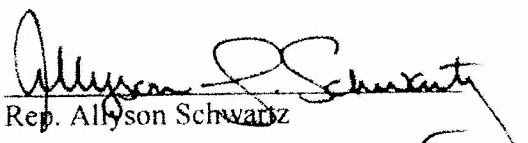
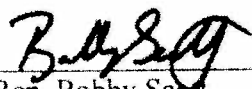

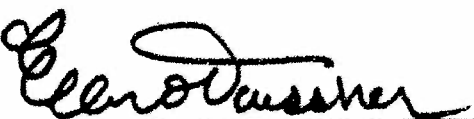

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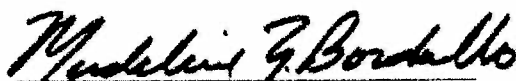



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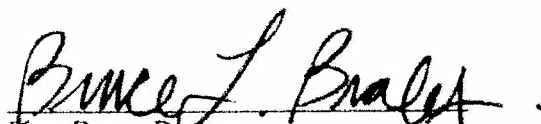



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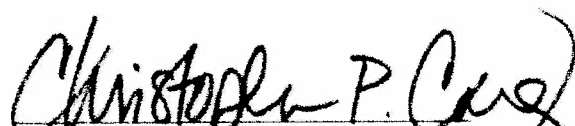

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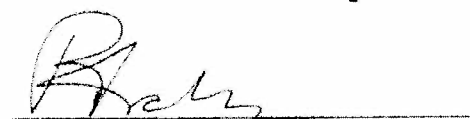

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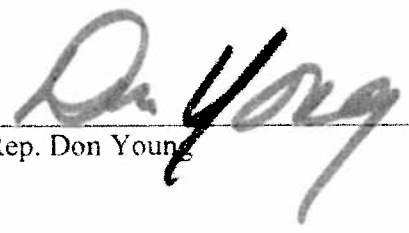

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