

Sample Resolution

Resolution for County Commissioners

A Resolution

Recommending to the Congress of the United States that the cap on the Crime Victims Fund be raised to one billion dollars and that the increase in funds be allocated entirely to State Victim Assistance Grants.

WHEREAS, The Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-473, 42 U.S.C. § 10601 et seq. (a.k.a. "VOCA") established the Crime Victims Fund, which is one of the main sources of money and support for crime victims and crime victims services; and

WHEREAS, All funds placed in the Crime Victims Fund are derived from federal criminal offenders via fines, forfeited bail bonds, penalty fees, and special assessments collected by the United States Attorneys' Offices, the United States courts, and the Bureau of Prisons, and do not rely on any tax-generated revenues; and

WHEREAS, The Crime Victims Fund provides critical funding for formula grants to states for victim compensation and victim assistance, in addition to funds for the Children's Justice Act, the Victim Notification System, training and technical assistance, and federal victim assistance within the United States Attorneys' Offices and FBI; and

WHEREAS, State victim compensation programs pay directly for medical care, counseling, lost wages, funerals, and other out-of-pocket expenses for victims of crimes including domestic violence, child abuse, rape, and homicide; and

WHEREAS, State victim assistance grantee programs provide critical services to victims of crime, including crisis intervention, counseling, emergency shelter, child care, and emergency transportation; and

WHEREAS, States may utilize compensation grants and victim assistance grants over a four-year period, thus enabling them to plan and manage the distribution of funds over time; and

WHEREAS, In Pennsylvania, victim assistance programs in all 67 counties received funding from the Crime Victims Fund, as administered by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency; and

WHEREAS, In 2000, Congress began capping annual spending from the Fund in order to ensure that a stable level of funding remains available for use to fund crime victim programs in future years; and

WHEREAS, Since 2004, the cap on the amount released has been lower than the amount of deposits into the Fund, thereby holding back more than 1.430 billion dollars collected for the Fund; and

WHEREAS, Despite these surpluses, in 2008 the cap on funds released was decreased by 35 million dollars, from 625 million dollars in 2007 to 590 million dollars in 2008, while the amount of deposits into the fund was 1.017 billion dollars in 2008; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, in addition to the 35 million dollar reduction in the cap, another 34.2 million dollars was taken from released funds to pay for management and administration costs of the federal Office of Justice Programs that administers the Fund; and

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WHEREAS, Of the various programs paid for by the Crime Victims Fund, the State Victim Assistance Grants suffered the most drastic cuts, dropping from 395.9 million dollars in 2006 to 309 million dollars in 2008; and

WHEREAS, The amount of state victim assistance grants to Pennsylvania has dropped from 15,858,000 dollars in 2006 to 11,313,000 dollars in 2008, a reduction of 6,723,000 dollars, which are awarded to community-based crime victim services programs throughout the Commonwealth, as administered by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency; and

WHEREAS, Crime victim assistance programs throughout Pennsylvania are struggling to cope with these dramatic cuts and consequently, services to crime victims are in jeopardy, and are expecting a further cut of 18 percent effective July 2009; and

WHEREAS, The Crime Victims Fund's balance is currently 1.904 billion dollars, with another 710 million dollars estimated to be deposited in 2009; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the County Commission of _____ County, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, recommends to Congress that the annual cap on the VOCA Crime Victims Fund be increased to one billion dollars, and that the increase in released funds be allocated entirely to State Victim Assistance Grants; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of County Commission of _____ County, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, transmit copies of this Resolution to the President pro tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation, and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.