



Anticipated Questions/Comments and Answers Regarding VOCA

(courtesy of CPEDV/VALORUS)

Budget Request: Support the \$103 Million to backfill lost federal funds for the Victim's of Crime Act (VOCA) Program.

Why has the federal funding declined?

- VOCA is not funded by traditional taxpayer dollars; it is a separate fund composed of fees and penalties from DOJ convictions. VOCA was passed in 1984, and in recent years, prosecution approaches have shifted so that settlements from those approaches didn't go into the fund. As the fund balance has been shrinking, Congress has been reducing how much money they release.
- The VOCA Fix Act was passed in 2021 to address this underlying issue, and it is helping, but as of now, the fund balance and release amount remain far too low to sustain the current landscape of victim services.

The state budget has a huge deficit to address; we can't be spending new money.

- We understand the budget realities and the fact that the Legislature has hard decisions to make.
- However, without state intervention, crime survivors will be left out in the cold. When we think about the high-risk domestic violence cases we work with, we know that without services, people will die. Sexual assault survivors deserve accompaniment to forensic exams and counseling following sexual violence. Without these services, survivors will continue to be traumatized.
- The state's total Public Safety budget and overall budget are both far more than the \$103 million in the legislature's proposal. This is a tiny fraction of the state's spending, but failing to include the funding will have devastating consequences.
- Budgets reflect our values, and we are asking that the state value the lives of crime survivors.

Who is championing the budget request?

- Assembly and Senate leadership and budget committees have written \$103 Million into the Legislature's budget proposal.
- Assemblymember Eloise Gómez Reyes is leading the effort in the Assembly. Twenty-two other Assemblymembers joined her in signing a budget request letter.
- Senators Rubio, Umberg and Durazo submitted letters of support.

AB 1956 (Reyes): Crime Victim Services Stabilization Act

Who will receive this funding?

- All current VOCA grant recipients who also receive federal VOCA funding. This includes rape crisis centers, domestic violence programs, children advocacy centers, human trafficking centers, district attorney offices, and others.

Why 10%?

- At this rate, our programs can only sustain a 10% cut or less. Cuts higher than 10% have devastating impacts on the survivors we serve.

AB 2432 (Gabriel): Crime Victim Services Funding

Why a penalty on corporations?

- This approach mirrors the federal government's funding of crime victim services. It creates a new funding stream without burdening individuals.

How much funding will it generate?

- The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) is developing an estimate. That information should be available soon.

How quickly will these funds be available?

- That will depend on the speed and frequency of convictions and penalty payments.

Is there any opposition?

- Currently, the California Chamber of Commerce opposes the bill. CPEDV/VALORUS are working with them to understand their concerns and address them.