

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 30, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Schumer:

We write to urge you to include funding in the upcoming reconciliation package to support programs at the Department of Justice that provide services for victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. At a time when incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault have sharply increased, additional funding for these programs is critical.

As the country reopens, more evidence has emerged that the pandemic caused the rates and severity of incidents of domestic violence to increase across the country.¹ Social isolation, economic uncertainty, and general anxiety about the virus added layers of stress for many families and increased the risk of intimate partner violence. During the pandemic, reports suggested that abusers were using COVID-19 to isolate their victims, withhold financial resources, and refuse medical aid.² Service providers struggled to meet the need for services including crisis intervention, shelter and transitional housing, and legal assistance.

Like many of the consequences of the pandemic, this strain on resources has disproportionately impacted traditionally underserved populations, such as Black and Latino communities, rural communities, and Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, and American Indian communities.

Through the Department of Justice, the federal government provides critical support for programs that are particularly needed at this time, including support for sexual assault service providers, law enforcement, and transitional housing programs, as well as for organizations that address the needs of communities of color and underserved populations.

Since the pandemic began, however, Congress has yet to provide supplemental funding to programs at the Department of Justice. Although the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the relief package that passed with the Consolidated Appropriations Act last December provided funding for programs authorized by the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, neither included funding for sexual assault or domestic violence-related

¹ Jeffrey Kluger, *Domestic Violence Is a Pandemic Within the COVID-19 Pandemic*, Time Magazine (Feb. 3, 2021). <https://time.com/5928539/domestic-violence-covid-19/>

² *National Domestic Violence Hotline*. “Staying Safe During COVID-19” (March 13, 2020). <https://www.thehotline.org/2020/03/13/staying-safe-during-covid-19/>

programs at the Justice Department. The American Rescue Plan Act also did not include funds for Justice Department programs.

Therefore, we respectfully request that the upcoming reconciliation package include the following:

- At least \$100 million for the Sexual Assault Service Program;
- At least \$100 million for VAWA STOP Grants for victim service providers, with at least 20 percent of the funding for eligible entities under 34 U.S.C. § 20124(c) and equitable distribution of funding between services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault;
- \$15 million for grants to support families in the justice system;
- \$15 million to support the Disability Grant Program;
- \$20 million for rural domestic violence and child abuse enforcement assistance grants;
- \$25 million for culturally specific services for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking;
- \$50 million for Victims of Child Abuse Act grants;
- \$50 million for grants to Tribal governments, Tribal coalitions, Tribal non-profit organizations, and Tribal organizations that serve Native victims;
- At least \$25 million for Grants for Outreach and Services to Underserved Populations; and,
- At least \$40 million to VAWA Transitional Housing Assistance Grants.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter and your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

C. A. Booker

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Maggie Hassan

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Tina Smith

Tina Smith
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Ron Wyden

Ron Wyden
United States Senator