

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 30, 2015

The Honorable Loretta Lynch
Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Lynch:

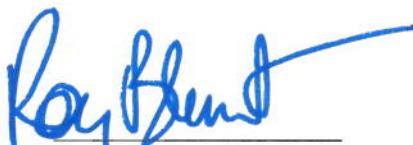
We write on behalf of all child victims of crime to urge you to confirm that children's advocacy centers are eligible for reimbursement under the VOCA Victim Assistance Grant Program for expenses related to conducting forensic interviews and forensic medical examinations for child abuse victims in a multidisciplinary setting. Forensic interviews and medical examinations are integral to providing appropriate victim services to children who have been abused.

Over the last three decades, Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) have continually improved, refined and defined ways of helping child abuse and child sex trafficking victims, and it all starts with the forensic interview. Forensic interviews conducted at CACs are child-centered and coordinated to avoid duplication and re-victimization of the child. Forensic interviews are also the gateway to further victim services for children who have been abused as they result in referrals for trauma assessments, mental health services for child victims and non-offending family members, victim support and advocacy, and medical evaluations. Last year, CACs provided services and forensic interviews to more than 315,000 children nationwide.

CACs also conduct forensic medical examinations, in conjunction with the forensic interview, to ensure that any available medical evidence is gathered while also treating any physical injuries from the abuse. An accurate history is essential in making the appropriate medical diagnosis and determining the appropriate treatment. Because this is essential, CACs use health care providers with pediatric experience and child abuse expertise to conduct the medical evaluations.

For CACs, both forensic interviews and forensic medical examinations are key components and essential for healing and justice for victims and non-offending caregivers. Confirming that the VOCA Victim Assistance Grant Program includes forensic interviews and forensic medical examinations as allowable direct services costs will give CACs access to critical resources needed to serve child victims within their communities. It is for this reason that we encourage you to allow forensic interviews and forensic medical examinations to be eligible for reimbursement under the VOCA Victim Assistance Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration.

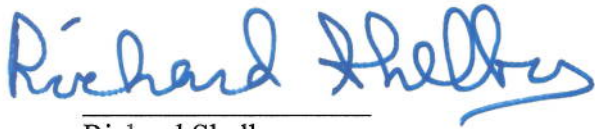


Roy Blunt
United States Senator

Sincere regards,



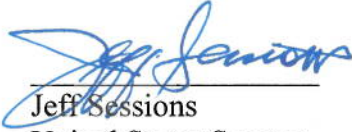
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



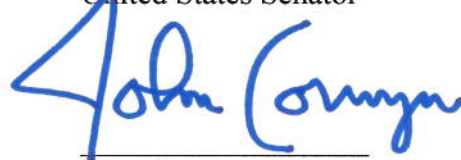
Richard Shelby
United States Senator



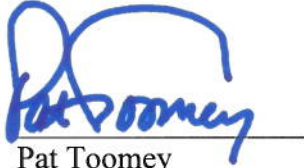
Barbara Mikulski
United States Senator



Jeff Sessions
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



Pat Toomey
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Thad Cochran
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



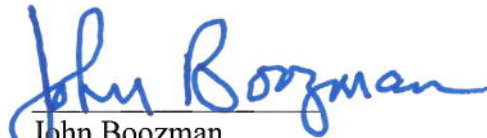
Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



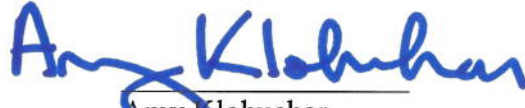
Richard Burr
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Joe Donnelly
United States Senator



Michael Bennet
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator