

May 29, 2019

Dear Senators and Representatives,

On behalf of YWCA USA and the 104 local YWCAs in 38 states listed below, we respectfully urge you to provide full funding in FY20 for the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA). These two landmark bills support victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other forms of gender-based violence.



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YWCA is the largest network of domestic and sexual assault services providers in the country, with more than half of our 200+ associations in 46 states and the District of Columbia providing these life-saving services. Each year, local YWCAs rely on VAWA and FVPSA funding to provide women, children and families with emergency shelter, transitional housing, crisis hotlines, counseling, court assistance, and other community safety programs.

Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the federal government's only dedicated funding for domestic violence shelters and outreach programs. YWCAs use FVPSA funding together with local, state, and private investment to help victims access safety and resources. We are grateful that the House Labor-HHS Appropriations bill fully funds FVPSA at \$175 million for an increase of \$10.5 million, and we strongly encourage the Senate to, at a minimum, match this funding.

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) authorizes programs administered by DOJ and HHS to prevent and address domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking. VAWA programs provide significant support to YWCAs. Among the many critical programs that need more support are:

- **The Rural Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking Program** administered by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), which helps victims who face geographic challenges in reaching service providers. In one study, over 25% of women in small rural and isolated areas lived more than 40 miles from the closest service provider, compared to less than 1% of women in urban settings.
- **The Consolidated Grant Program to Address Children and Youth Experiencing Domestic and Sexual Assault and Engage Men and Boys as Allies Program**, also administered by OVW, helps children exposed to violence and abuse, prevents teen dating violence, and engages men and boys in an effort to combat violence against women and girls. Limited by funding, OVW is only able to fund 12-16 programs each year. At the same

time, research by DOJ and CDC found 60% of children in the U.S. have been exposed to violence or abuse and almost half of children (46.3%) had been assaulted in the previous year. These children are more likely to have health and mental health problems, including opioid addiction and other substance use disorders, to drop out of school, and struggle to be economically independent.

We are grateful that the House Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill included funding increases for many of the VAWA programs including \$50 million for the Rural program and \$20 million for the Consolidated Youth program. We urge the Senate to match this investment. These VAWA programs are just two examples of the many vital grant programs that support our network and the victims and survivors we serve.

Thank you in advance for your support, and attached, please find success stories from across YWCA's network illustrating the impact these programs have in our communities.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Morgan Brand, Government Relations Manager at mbrand@ywca.org.

Sincerely,



Alejandra Y. Castillo
CEO, YWCA USA

Alaska

YWCA Alaska

Alabama

YWCA Central Alabama

Arizona

YWCA Southern Arizona

California

YWCA Berkeley/Oakland

YWCA Glendale

California, cont'd

YWCA Orange County

YWCA Pasadena-Foothill Valley

YWCA San Diego County

YWCA San Francisco & Marin

YWCA San Francisco & Marin

YWCA San Gabriel Valley

YWCA Silicon Valley

YWCA Sonoma County

YWCA Watsonville



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Colorado

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Connecticut

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YWCA Hartford Region

YWCA New Britain

Delaware

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District of Columbia

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YWCA Greater Miami-Dade

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Hawaii

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YWCA Kauai County

YWCA of Hawaii Island

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YWCA Lewiston-Clarkston

Illinois

YWCA Elgin

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YWCA Lake County

YWCA McLean County

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago

YWCA Northwestern Illinois

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YWCA University of Illinois

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YWCA Central Indiana

YWCA Evansville

YWCA North Central Indiana

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YWCA Northwest Indiana

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Massachusetts

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YWCA Northeastern Massachusetts

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New York, cont'd

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YWCA NorthEastern New York
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Tennessee, cont'd

YWCA Knoxville and the Tennessee
Valley
YWCA Nashville & Middle
Tennessee

Texas

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