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.

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
Colorado
YWCA Pueblo

Connecticut
YWCA Greenwich
YWCA Hartford Region
YWCA New Britain

Delaware
YWCA Delaware

District of Columbia
YWCA National Capital Area

Florida
YWCA Greater Miami-Dade
YWCA Palm Beach County

Hawaii
YWCA Hawaii Island
YWCA Kauai County
YWCA of Hawaii Island

Iowa
YWCA Clinton

Idaho
YWCA Lewiston-Clarkston

Illinois
YWCA Elgin
YWCA Evanston/North Shore
YWCA Lake County
YWCA McLean County
YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
YWCA Northwestern Illinois
YWCA Sauk Valley
YWCA University of Illinois

Indiana
YWCA Central Indiana
YWCA Evansville
YWCA North Central Indiana

Indiana, cont’d
YWCA Northwest Indiana

Kansas
YWCA Northeast Kansas

Louisiana
YWCA New Orleans
YWCA Northwest Louisiana

Massachusetts
YWCA Boston
YWCA Central Massachusetts
YWCA Western Massachusetts
YWCA Northeastern Massachusetts
YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts

Maine
YWCA Mount Desert Island

Montana
YWCA Mankato
YWCA Billings
YWCA Great Falls
YWCA Helena
YWCA Missoula

North Carolina
YWCA Asheville

Nebraska
YWCA Grand Island
YWCA Lincoln

New Hampshire
YWCA New Hampshire

New Jersey
YWCA Bergen County

New York
YWCA Binghamton & Broome County
New York, cont’d
YWCA Brooklyn
YWCA Cortland
YWCA Genesee County
YWCA Mohawk Valley
YWCA Niagara Frontier
YWCA NorthEastern New York
YWCA Rochester & Monroe County
YWCA Western New York

Ohio
YWCA Dayton
YWCA Elyria
YWCA Greater Cincinnati
YWCA Hamilton
YWCA Mahoning Valley
YWCA Van Wert County

Oklahoma
YWCA Enid

Oregon
YWCA Greater Portland

Pennsylvania
YWCA Allentown
YWCA Bethlehem
YWCA Carlisle
YWCA Gettysburg & Adams County
YWCA Greater Johnstown
YWCA Greater Pittsburgh
YWCA Hanover
YWCA Titusville

Rhode Island
YWCA Rhode Island

South Carolina
YWCA of the Upper Lowlands

Tennessee, cont’d
YWCA Knoxville and the Tennessee Valley
YWCA Nashville & Middle Tennessee

Texas
YWCA El Paso del Norte Region
YWCA Greater Austin

Utah
YWCA Utah

Virginia
YWCA Richmond (VA)
YWCA South Hampton Roads

Vermont
YWCA Vermont

Washington
YWCA Clark County
YWCA Kitsap County
YWCA Olympia
YWCA Seattle|King|Snohomish
YWCA Spokane
YWCA Yakima

Wisconsin
YWCA Madison
YWCA Southeast Wisconsin

West Virginia
YWCA Charleston
YWCA Wheeling