



STATE OF FLORIDA

**ASHLEY MOODY
ATTORNEY GENERAL**

August 6, 2020

The Honorable Marco Rubio
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rick Scott
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Rubio and Senator Scott:

I write in support of language in the COVID-19 relief bill that would address several urgent needs in the Victim of Crimes Act (VOCA) program.

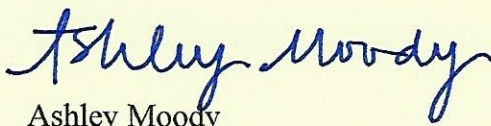
Over the past several years, deposits to the Crime Victims Fund have decreased substantially, for several reasons, causing a significant decline in the amount of money available to the States for VOCA grants. Unfortunately, crimes such as domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse increase in times of crisis, and the crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic is no different. Many victim service providers have seen an increase in requests for services, and others are preparing for a surge in requests as stay-at-home orders are phased out. Virtually all States have experienced declines in revenues during the COVID-19 crisis, which has added to stresses on state victim compensation programs.

The COVID-19 relief bill that was recently passed by the House of Representatives, H.R. 6800, contains in section 190902 an amendment to VOCA that would add language to 34 U.S.C. 20101(b), providing that funds from deferred prosecution and non-prosecution agreements be deposited into the Crime Victims Fund. I would urge that the Senate bill and the final bill include not only that amendment, but additional language recommended by the National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators and the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards. That language would allow for waivers of match requirements for programs receiving

VOCA victim assistance grants, increase the statutory formula for VOCA compensation grants to 75 percent, eliminate the need for States to deduct restitution and subrogation recoveries when calculating grant amounts, and provide additional emergency funding for current revenue shortfalls being experienced by the States.

More than ever, during these difficult times, we have a responsibility to provide adequate support to crime victims, many of whom are among our most vulnerable citizens. The modest statutory changes to VOCA, supported by the experts in the area of crime victim assistance and compensation, should be part of the COVID-19 relief bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ashley Moody". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ashley Moody
Florida Attorney General

cc: Members of the Florida Delegation, United States House of Representatives