May 7, 2020

The Honorable José Serrano
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science & Related Agencies
H-305
United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies
H-305
United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Serrano and Ranking Member Aderholt:

Thank you for your strong leadership as our country addresses the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis. We are confident that your work in the House of Representatives is saving lives.

We write to respectfully urge any forthcoming legislation provide more assistance to Americans during the COVID-19 crisis include $50 million to be appropriated for the purpose specified in 34 U.S.C. 10461(10).

While we are grateful that the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act made important investments in the Family Violence Prevention Services Act and in the National Domestic Violence Hotline, this bill did not include financial support for programs such as Family Justice Centers under 34 USC 10461(10). These programs are designed to bring together victim advocates from victim service providers, civil legal attorneys, legal advocates, government victim assistance, prosecutors, law enforcement, and representatives from community-based organizations into one centralized location.

At Family Justice Centers, survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and elder abuse have access to critically important wraparound resources. Survivors can receive assistance in obtaining temporary restraining orders, find safe housing, meet their prosecutors, work with detectives, and obtain forensic exams.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic and stay at home orders, Family Justice Centers have seen a dramatic increase in domestic violence cases, with Centers across the country reporting requests for services increase by 20 to 30 percent. Therefore, we request that forthcoming legislation provide $50 million in appropriations for the purpose specified in 34 U.S.C. 10461(10).

Thank you for your consideration of this request.
Sincerely,

Mike Levin  
Member of Congress

Josh Harder  
Member of Congress

Scott Peters  
Member of Congress

Susan A. Davis  
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
Member of Congress

Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress

Mikie Sherrill  
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress

Ami Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Rosa DeLauro  
Member of Congress

Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress

Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Kendra S. Horn  
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress
Harley Rouda  Member of Congress
Anthony G. Brown  Member of Congress
Brian Higgins  Member of Congress

Full list of signatures:
Mike Levin
Josh Harder
Scott Peters
Stephen Lynch
Jahana Hayes
Nydia M. Velázquez
Susan Davis
Gwen Moore
Mark Takano
Juan Vargas
Jamie Raskin
Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Derek Kilmer
Ro Khanna
James P. McGovern
Ruben Gallego
Kathy Castor
Mikie Sherrill
Adriano Espaillat
Tony Cárdenas
Tulsi Gabbard
Terri A. Sewell
Marcia L. Fudge
Mike Thompson
Earl Blumenauer
Ami Bera, M.D.
Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Chris Pappas
Max Rose
Albio Sires
Kendra S. Horn
Diana DeGette
Rosa DeLauro
Zoe Lofgren
Anthony G. Brown
Brian Higgins
Harley Rouda

CC: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House; The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, House Minority Leader; The Honorable James Clyburn, Chair, House Select Committee on the Coronavirus Crisis