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AG SLATERY URGES CONGRESS TO EXPAND FUNDING FOR CRIME VICTIMS

All 56 State and Territorial AGs Call for Increased Funding and More Flexibility

Nashville- Attorney General Herbert H. Slatery III joins a coalition of state and territorial attorneys general representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. territories urging Congress to adopt key changes to the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) that provide critical financial support to victims of violent crimes and their families.

In a letter, the attorneys general call on Congress to adopt changes to the Crime Victims Fund that supports state victims' services programs. The recommendations will stabilize the Fund's finances and provide more flexibility to grantees who are providing services to victims and their families.

"For many victims of crime, money from this fund is their only financial source of support," said General Slatery. "These changes should make it easier for Tennessee to support victims and their families in our state."

Deposits to the Fund, established by the Victims of Crime Act Of 1984 originate from criminal fines, forfeited bail bonds, penalties and special assessments collected by U.S. Attorneys' Offices, federal courts and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The Fund covers expenses like medical care, mental health counseling, lost wages, courtroom advocacy and temporary housing.

The financial health of the Crime Victims Fund is at risk. In 2015, Congress increased the cap on distributions to the Fund, allowing 2.5 million more victims to receive support. However, deposits sharply decreased after a decline in the fines and penalties from federal criminal cases.

The coalition makes three recommendations:

- **Redirect fines and fees from corporate deferred and non-prosecution agreements to the Fund:** The Department of Justice increasingly uses deferred and non-prosecution agreements to resolve corporate misconduct. The AGs asks Congress to redirect these deposits to the Fund. In 2018 and 2019, recoveries resulting from these agreements were about \$8 billion each year.





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- **Increase the rate of federal reimbursement to states for victim compensation programs:** The letter recommends Congress increase reimbursement of state programs from 60 to 75 percent.
- **Extend the amount of time VOCA funds can be spent:** The coalition asks Congress to extend the 4-year period of funding so that state and local organizations can better plan and predict funding for long-term services.

To read the letter, click here:

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/attorneygeneral/documents/pr/2020/pr20-32-letter.pdf>

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