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Shapiro-Davis Administration Urges State and Federal Action to Support Victims of Crime

Lt. Gov. Austin Davis sends letter urging Pennsylvania's 17 representatives and two U.S. senators to appropriate at least \$1.9 billion in the federal budget to support victims of crime

HARRISBURG, PA – Lt. Gov. Austin Davis is calling on lawmakers at the state and federal level to support victims of crime by increasing federal funding under the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) to help struggling service providers and finalizing a state budget deal that includes a funding boost for victims compensation and assistance.

As Congress debates federal funding bills, [Davis is sending a letter](#) to Pennsylvania's 17 representatives and two U.S. senators, urging them to appropriate at least \$1.9 billion in VOCA funding through this fiscal year's budget, as well as asking them to sign on to accompanying legislation that would stabilize the Crime Victims Fund.

"While no financial assistance can undo their trauma, the victims compensation program – and the services provided by others standing with me today – can play an essential role in helping survivors rebuild their lives," said **Davis**, who also serves as chair of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). "Turning our back on victims is not an option."

"The prosecutor's job is to seek justice on behalf of all," said **Dauphin County District Attorney Fran Chardo**, who also serves as president of the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association. "An essential role is advocacy for the victims of crime, especially violent crimes. We need funding to ensure victims have access to the resources that give them a sense of safety and lead them toward a path of healing."

In Pennsylvania, VOCA-funded victim service programs assist nearly 150,000 individuals each year. Earlier this month, [PCCD approved more than \\$54 million in VOCA funding](#) to strengthen and expand these critical programs that support survivors across the Commonwealth.

"When we are able to do our jobs well, and have the resources needed to aid, protect and in many cases be a voice for victims, people we serve are able to move beyond traumatizing events and maintain home, family, marriage, and contribute to society," said **Dr. Paul Lukach**, CEO and executive director of the Crime Victim Center of Erie. "Our work is indeed an economic engine for the good of all."

In addition, PCCD administers the Victims Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP), which provides direct funding to offset expenses like medical bills, counseling, funeral or relocation costs that burden crime victims.

"The \$9 million proposed for VCAP is not just another a budgeted line item; it's a lifeline for victims of crime in every urban, suburban and rural community across the Commonwealth," said **Tiffiney Hall**, who is a survivor of domestic violence. "Your support is proof to victims of crime that Pennsylvania is invested in their healing."

Each year, the program receives an average of 12,000 claims for eligible expenses. Over the past five years, PCCD has paid more than 76,000 VCAP claims totaling \$65 million in eligible expenses for citizens across all 67 Pennsylvania counties.

In last year's state budget, the Shapiro-Davis Administration secured \$5 million in state funding for VCAP to address a shortfall in the fund. [This year's Shapiro-Davis budget proposes a \\$9 million transfer of state funds as another stopgap measure.](#)

For more information about VOCA funding and how it impacts Pennsylvania, check out [PCCD's toolkit for advocates.](#)