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Governor Newsom Fails to Support Victims of Crime

California preliminary budget does not set aside essential funding for victim services

We are advocates representing victims and survivors of child abuse, domestic violence, sexual violence, elder abuse, and human trafficking, as well as providers of legal, housing, and other assistance that hundreds of thousands of California victims and survivors depend on each year. We represent over 190 organizations that serve these victims and survivors.. We are profoundly disappointed by the omission of funding for victims' services programs in the Governor's initial budget draft released today. This decision puts California's entire safety net for victims of crime in jeopardy, as providers of counseling, legal support, shelters, and advocacy services face the prospect of a \$170 million+ cut to funding available to them as a result of a shortfall in the federal Crime Victims Fund. While this crisis may have originated at the federal level, it will have catastrophic impacts here in California cities and towns, in all regions, and with all demographic groups, with particularly severe impacts on people with low income, communities of color and native/indigenous communities, and rural areas. We certainly acknowledge the difficult budget environment that the state government is confronting, but these services– from rape crisis centers to domestic violence shelter beds to child abuse counseling– are the very definition of essential.

Should the state fail to take action in the coming months, hundreds of thousands of crime victims will be left without support at the most critical and traumatic times of their lives. We believe that the vast majority of Californians would consider this unacceptable, and that they expect their elected leaders will do what is necessary to support victims of crime.

It is imperative that, as California's elected leaders, Governor Newsom and the Legislature act to protect California crime survivors from the consequences these cuts would bring. We will continue to engage with Governor Newsom, Speaker Rivas, Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins and incoming Senate President pro Tempore Mike McGuire, and legislators from both parties in the coming months to make the case for urgent action.

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The California VOCA Advocacy Alliance consists of statewide organizations dedicated to supporting survivors of crime, advocates, and their communities. Our large coalition works to advance the rights of survivors of trafficking, child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, and others. With a common goal to advocate for our communities, we center equitable access to victim services in our decisions.