



Advocates Call for Increased Sexual Assault Survivor Support in California on Denim Day

Survivors and advocates rallied against disastrous grant cancellations by the federal government

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SACRAMENTO, CA - Policymakers, advocates, and community members gathered at the California Capitol wearing denim to stand in solidarity with survivors of sexual violence as they are experiencing an unprecedented wave of grant terminations.

Survivors of sexual assault are facing a disastrous reality as the Office of Justice Programs through the Department of Justice (DOJ) terminated more than 360 federal grants, totalling more than \$800 million in already awarded funds to communities across the country. The organizations facing grant cancellations rely on federal grants as part of their overall funding to promote public safety and provide survivors and victims with access to healing services, legal aid, and more.

Legislators at the rally spoke on how important it is to stand for survivors and the advocates that support them. Assemblymember Pilar Schiavo, CA-40, called out how important funding is for survivors and what it means if their grants are not reinstated, saying, "This administration is specifically cancelling grants to organizations that help sexual assault survivors. These federal funds are disappearing and putting people's lives in danger."

Sandra Henriquez, CEO of ValorUS®, condemned the grant cancellations and federal comments calling them "wasteful spending." She repeated how important funding is for survivors of sexual assault and the organizations that support them, saying, "The horrifying reality is that these cuts to programs and mass grant terminations will fall hardest on communities that already experience sexual violence at higher rates, like our immigrant and undocumented communities, LGBTQ+ community, and incarcerated folks."

Due to the terminations, organizations will need to reduce services to survivors and communities, with some anticipating having to close their doors altogether. The lack of advocates and services to support survivors and continue preventative education will result in lives lost and less safe communities.

VALOR calls on the California legislature and Governor Newsom to stand with survivors and their advocates as they face grant terminations and backfill \$176 million in Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding. VOCA's Crime Victims Fund is made up of court fines paid by convicted federal offenders, but has dwindled due to the lack of court cases. It is the main funding source of organizations that support survivors and their communities, which are currently facing a terrifying reality that will result in lives lost.

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[VALOR](#) is a California-based, national organization and California's sexual assault coalition committed to advancing equity and ending sexual violence. Since our founding in 1980, we have continued to build dynamic relationships across a diverse range of communities, institutions and systems, and mobilize our network of survivors and advocates to influence change. Through leadership, prevention, and advocacy,

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Advancing Equity. Ending Sexual Violence.

we are fearlessly pursuing a world free from violence where the dignity of every person is valued and respected.

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