



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 20, 2026

Contacts: Democracy Forward: press@democracyforward.org

Nationwide Coalition Challenges Administration's Attempt to Withhold Support from Noncitizen Victims of Crime

Legal Filing Seeks Immediate Court Intervention to Protect Violence Prevention Funding

Providence, R.I. — A nationwide group of state domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions filed today an [amended complaint](#) and a [motion for a temporary restraining order](#) (TRO) asking the U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island to block the Trump-Vance administration from enforcing unlawful new restrictions on grants issued to help victims of domestic violence and other crimes.

The filings follow a [lawsuit](#) – *Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, et al. v. Bondi* – filed in June 2025 that successfully obtained preliminary relief against the administration's conditions on federal funding for life-saving programs administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). DOJ's efforts targeted grantees that implement diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, and efforts that recognize and respect people regardless of gender identity. The court issued a preliminary order in August 2025, blocking DOJ from enforcing its unlawful restrictions, which would have made it impossible for many grantees to operate legally or effectively.

Now, DOJ has imposed additional conditions on critical grant funding administered by the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) in its Office for Victims of Crime (OVC). These new conditions include restrictions and limitations that would prevent providers from serving certain noncitizen survivors. The coalition argues that the conditions are unauthorized, vague, and that they fail to account for the devastating consequences they will have.

The coalition includes the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence; Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault; District of Columbia Coalition Against Domestic Violence; End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence; Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Jane Doe Inc. (The Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence); Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence; Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence; Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence; Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence; New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence; North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence; Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence;

916.446.2520 | Valor.US

1215 K Street | Ste 1850 | Sacramento, CA 95814

SACRAMENTO | LOS ANGELES | WASHINGTON D.C.



Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence; VALORUS; Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence; Violence Free Minnesota; Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance; Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence; and Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault. They are represented by Democracy Forward, Jacobson Lawyers Group, Lawyers' Committee for Rhode Island, Lynette Labinger for the ACLU Foundation of Rhode Island, and the National Women's Law Center.

The amended complaint expands the coalition's original lawsuit and asks the court to halt enforcement of the new restrictions while the case proceeds. The newest unlawful conditions put organizations in the impossible position of having to either risk severe financial penalties and undermine their missions or sacrifice essential funding that supports survivors of violence.

The coalition issued the following statement:

"Funding for victims of crime has supported lifesaving services for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors and strengthened communities nationwide. These grants help sustain shelters, crisis response services, legal assistance, prevention programs, and coordinated community efforts that victims rely on in moments of profound danger. The administration's new restrictions threaten to undermine that work, create confusion and fear among providers and survivors alike, and place critical resources at risk. We are asking the court to ensure that congressionally authorized grants can continue to support survivors as Congress intended, without unlawful political conditions attached."

"This administration continues to seek ways to deprive people and communities in vulnerable situations from accessing government services and vital funding that Congress saw fit to approve. This does not make anyone's lives better, and yet continues to traumatize service providers committed to serving those most in need," said Robin Thurson, Legal Director at Democracy Forward. "Thanks to the bravery of our clients, we have successfully held back efforts to target funding at multiple federal agencies, and we are confident that we will again be able to protect not only our plaintiffs but also the millions of people they serve against this unlawful and cruel effort."

"We continue to stand with our brave clients who do this important work day in and day out," said Lynn Eisenberg from Jacobson Lawyers Group. "These new requirements would create significant barriers for survivors seeking the lifesaving assistance they need. Survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault deserve access to support and safety, regardless of their immigration status."

"Restricting life-saving services to domestic violence and sexual assault victims, because of their immigration status, is unlawful and inhumane," said Amy Romero, Chief Legal Counsel at



Lawyers' Committee for Rhode Island. "This administration recently prioritized animal welfare, yet they have complete disregard for the welfare of children, individuals, and families who have been victimized by crime."

Steven Brown, executive director of the ACLU of RI, added: "Each additional attempt by the federal government to restrict funding for these life-saving services — now weaponizing citizenship status to exclude survivors from receiving support — is as cruel and unlawful as the last. We will continue to use every legal avenue to defend this funding."

"DOJ continues its relentless assault on diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and immigrant communities in an attempt to silence providers and strip survivors of the protections Congress explicitly guaranteed," said Lauren Khouri, Senior Director of Workplace Equality at the National Women's Law Center. "These unyielding attacks are not abstract policy debates — they directly endanger women and families who rely on these programs to survive. We refuse to allow this administration to bully service providers into abandoning survivors or erasing entire communities from care simply to advance a political agenda rooted in fear, exclusion and discrimination."

In the filings, the coalition argues that the administration's new conditions exceed DOJ's authority, violate the Constitution, conflict with statutory requirements protecting communities in vulnerable situations, and unlawfully leverage the threat of False Claims Act liability to pressure providers to alter their programming and speech.

Read the amended complaint [here](#) and the motion for temporary restraining order [here](#).

###

ValorUS® (VALOR) is a California-based, national anti-sexual violence organization and California's sexual assault coalition, representing the 84 rape crisis center programs across the state. 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 advancing equity, leadership, prevention, and advocacy, we are fearlessly pursuing a world free from violence where the dignity of every person is valued and respected. For more information, visit valor.us.

###

Democracy Forward Foundation is a national legal organization that advances democracy and social progress through litigation, policy, public education, and regulatory engagement. For more information, please visit www.democracyforward.org.