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Nonprofit Groups, State Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalitions Challenge Unlawful Conditions Imposed by HHS

Grant Restrictions Jeopardize Crucial Funding for Critical Services, Support and Healthcare

Providence, R.I. – A lawsuit has been filed today by a coalition of organizations to challenge unlawful new grant restrictions from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that are forcing hundreds of nonprofit organizations, domestic violence and sexual assault coalitions, and a county safety net hospital to choose between accepting unlawful conditions or forgoing grant funding that is needed to offer critical services, support, and healthcare for communities. Children, youth and families, survivors of domestic and sexual violence, and other vulnerable groups will be affected if these new grant conditions are allowed to remain in place.

The Trump-Vance administration is attempting to unlawfully impose grant restrictions on HHS grantees that will be immensely harmful to communities across the country. The grant restrictions prevent Plaintiffs from supporting transgender individuals, implementing diversity and inclusion practices that aim to address racial disparities, and using Housing First strategies that have been proven effective, among other policy directives drawn from a series of executive orders from the Trump-Vance administration. The restrictions would have far-reaching impacts due to the expansive mission of HHS, the largest grantmaking federal agency, which awards billions of dollars in grants each year — including more than $81 billion in discretionary awards alone in 2026.

In response to the unlawful restrictions, a nationwide coalition took legal action today to ask a court to intervene and stop HHS from imposing the grant restrictions. The coalition of plaintiffs includes the Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families, Community Care Alliance, Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 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, Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, Violence Free Iowa, Jane Doe Inc., the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, Kansas Coalition Against Sexual & 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, 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 Sexual Assault, Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, and Hennepin Healthcare System, Inc. The coalition is represented in the matter by Democracy Forward, the Lawyers' Committee for Rhode Island, and the ACLU Foundation of RI as cooperating counsel.

Quotes from California-based plaintiff organizations are as follows:

"We refuse to accept any grant conditions that deny trans and other marginalized survivors the support they need to heal. Together with the other state coalitions and plaintiff organizations, we're joining this lawsuit to protect California's safety net for survivors. This includes housing options, safety planning, counseling, and other life-saving services," said **Krista Colón, Executive Director, California Partnership to End Domestic Violence**

"VALOR stands for providing services to all survivors of sexual violence and support all communities to take actions to prevent sexual violence; VALOR stands against the federal government's attempts to restrict how and to whom these crucial services can be provided to." **David Lee, Deputy Director, ValorUS**

The attempt to weaponize federal funding is nothing new for the Trump-Vance administration. Earlier this year, a federal court blocked similar unlawful conditions that HHS imposed on grants in a lawsuit also brought by a nationwide coalition of domestic violence, sexual assault, housing, youth and homelessness organizations. Though the unlawful imposition of ideological conditions on grants has already been stopped by courts, the administration is again attempting to force nonprofit groups to either fundamentally betray their missions, legal obligations, and clients or to lose vital funding entirely. Not to mention, the policy priorities that the groups are forced to align with are impossibly vague, inconsistent with federal and state laws, and

expose nonprofit organizations everywhere to arbitrary and unpredictable enforcement.

The case is *RICCF v. Kennedy,* and the legal team at Democracy Forward working on the matter includes Aleshadaye Getachew, Anna Deffebach, Joel McElvain, and Robin Thurston. Plaintiffs are also represented by Amy Romero and Juan Bedoya, for the Lawyers' Committee for Rhode Island, and Lynette Labinger, cooperating counsel for the ACLU Foundation of Rhode Island.

Read the complaint here.

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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.

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The California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (the Partnership) works to prevent and end domestic violence in California by mobilizing over 1,000 survivors, advocates, organizations, and allies. Via public policy, prevention, communications, and community-based strategic engagement, we strive to build healthy relationships at all levels by eliminating the injustices which perpetuate cycles of violence, elevating and expanding opportunities for innovative solutions that center survivors, and building and funding support for local programs. For more information, visit cpedv.org.

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.