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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund was authorized by Congress in 1984 pursuant to the Victims of Crime Act to assist with the operation of federal, state, and local crime victim programs; the Fund is funded primarily by the fines, assessments, and fees imposed on federal offenders and not from taxpayers' dollars; and

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WHEREAS, The VOCA Fund, in turn, is distributed through formula grants to all 50 states for (1) victim assistance programs, (2) victim compensation programs, and (3) training and technical assistance to victim service providers; and

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WHEREAS, Approximately 3.8 million victims of all types of crime receive services from 4,400 service agencies per year through the victim assistance programs and hundreds of thousands of victims receive help through the victim compensation programs, all as a result of the VOCA Fund's existence; the Fund provides invaluable assistance with services through a number of public and non-profit entities including the provision of crisis intervention, emergency shelter, transportation, counseling, and criminal justice advocacy, the payment of medical costs, funeral and burial expenses, lost wages, and mental health related costs; and

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1 WHEREAS, State and local prosecutors rely heavily upon the
2 VOCA Fund for the development and implementation of victim
3 services programs which, in part, notify victims of court
4 proceedings, transport victims to court, assist victims with
5 the completion of victim impact statements, provide
6 notification of offenders' release dates, assist victims in
7 recovering restitution, and work closely with victims of gang
8 violence, domestic abuse, and child and elder abuse to provide
9 a support system for those who must deal not only with
10 intimidation from offenders or third parties but often with
11 their own special needs; and

12 WHEREAS, It is critical that federal assistance with state
13 and local victim assistance and compensation programs remain
14 available due to the recent budget cuts at the state and local
15 levels; and

16 WHEREAS, The intent of Congress, expressed during the
17 authorization and appropriation of the VOCA Fund, was that a
18 stable source of funding remain available for the purpose of
19 assisting states with the provision of victims' services; and

20 WHEREAS, The impact of the rescission would be devastating
21 to victims of crime; negatively impact the ability of state and
22 local prosecutors to carry out their duties as mandated; and
23 impair the functioning of the criminal justice system;

1 therefore, be it

2 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
3 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
4 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that we urge the Congressional
5 members of the State of Illinois and the entire United States
6 Congress to continue funding victim assistance and
7 compensation programs and continue funding programs for
8 training and technical assistance to victim service providers
9 through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund which we find to
10 be a very worthwhile cause; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this Resolution be
12 forwarded to the Illinois Congressional delegation and the
13 Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and the
14 Majority Leader of the United States Senate.