



## In-Session Newsletter

March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### FEDERAL UPDATES

**VOCA Deposits** have not yet begun trending upward. It looks like we will have another **2-3 years** before the fund rebounds and trickles down to states.

**VAWA Reauthorization** was introduced in the Senate February 9, 2022, and is currently in committee. We have strong **bipartisan support** for this effort, and it is a priority for the Biden-Harris administration to get this passed. We could have a floor vote as early as next week. This is the farthest we have gotten in the last six years. **See Action Alert Below**

There are two **FVPSA Appropriation** bills in both House and Senate, and both bills are close to \$450M and have provisions for **direct cash assistance for survivors**. They are currently looking to attach it to another bill that is moving-possibly VAWA.

### Monthly Deposits into VOCA Crime Victims Fund

Sep 2021:	\$254,142,739
Oct 2021:	\$30,743,914
Nov 2021:	\$12,763,052
Dec 2021:	\$50,620,793
<b>Jan 2022:</b>	<b>\$32,963,883</b>

### LOCAL PROGRESS

#### DV/SA Funding

Programs that receive funding through CJCC have been reaching out to their communities including local legislators and the media. To check out the latest news stories about the funding crisis [CLICK HERE](#).

Rep. Gambill (Cartersville) began circulating a letter to be signed by his legislative colleagues a week ago. Already we have 55 legislators who have signed on! The letter will be given to Governor Kemp on or around Monday, March 7th. We are encouraged and hopeful that Gov. Kemp will assist with ARPA Funding.

On March 3rd, Programs met with members of Sen. Ossoff's office to discuss alternative funding options through Congressionally Directed Spending. These are projects that would be funded through an appropriations process. Projects can be new or ongoing. For a Summary of the call [Click HERE](#)



### **SAFE @ HOME ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM**

This bill would establish a program that would keep a survivors' new physical address private and provide a mail forwarding service for survivor's who meet eligibility. Legislative Counsel continues to work on the final draft of the bill. Chairman Houston Gaines (Athens) continues to give his support.

### **SAFE LEAVE FOR SURVIVORS**

HB847, sponsored by Rep. Michael Smith (District 41/Marietta), This bill would allow victims of DV/SA to take time off from work without being subject to termination or other adverse employment action. We are meeting with Rep. Smith Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **ON THE LOOKOUT**

#### **HB403**

Sponsored by Sen. Ben Watson (Savannah), this bill, among other things, establishes "Co-responder teams" made up of law enforcement and a member from a behavioral health community service board (CSB). The member of the CSB may physically accompany law enforcement when responding to behavioral health emergency crisis calls or be available virtually or by phone for consultation. The officer may consider input from the CSB member when determining whether or not to refer an individual for treatment, community support or hospital evaluation rather than making an arrest.

#### **HB359**

This bill is sponsored by Sen. John Albers (District 56/Roswell) This bill is sponsored by Chief Deputy Whip, John Albers. Among other things, this bill would provide mandatory minimums for persons previously convicted of a forcible felony, domestic violence felony or been involved in an act of family violence, and whose subsequent felony conviction also involved possession of a firearm. This bill also allows past history of domestic violence to be admitted as evidence during trial and includes "shared pregnancy in common" as part of the definition of "domestic abuse". It has not yet made it onto the Senate Rules calendar for the week of the 7th, but we expect that it will.

#### **HB1452**

This bill, sponsored by Rep. Houston Gaines (Athens) would revise the dating violence definition to include persons who are currently or have been in a romantic partnership within the last 12 months. The current statute definition states that the romantic partnership has to have been within the last 6 months. This bill was introduced 2/24 and sent to Judiciary Non-Civil Chaired by Rep. James Burchett (Waycross).



**ACTION ALERT**

More than 20 organizations from GA signed onto a letter to Sen. Feinstein thanking her for her commitment to getting VAWA reauthorized. This bill expands protections for victims of gender-based violence and fills gaps in current law. The bill could get a vote on the senate floor as early as this week. And though we have strong bi-partisan support our own Sen. Ossoff is not currently a co-sponsor. [Click here](#) to reach out to Sen. Ossoff and ask him to Co-sponsor the VAWA re-authorization bill.