On behalf of [Name of CAC], the [Your State CACs] and the almost 800 Children’s Advocacy Centers serving victims of child abuse, I want to thank you for your support of CACs. Because we value your partnership in fighting for all child abuse victims, we ask you to join us in supporting the *Fairness for Victims of Crime Act of 2015* and urge you to consider cosponsoring this important legislation.

As Children’s Advocacy Centers representing law enforcement, child protective services, prosecutors, medical professionals, mental healthcare providers, and victim advocates who assist and work directly with victims of child abuse, we see firsthand the devastating effects of crime—on both the victims and the communities in which they live. For victims to truly heal, it is critical they have access to needed recovery services, some of which are made available because of funding provided by the Crime Victims Fund.

Congress created the Crime Victims Fund in 1984 based on a simple idea: Money the government collects from those who commit crimes should be used to help those victimized by crime. Each year, criminal fines and penalties collected in federal court are deposited into the Crime Victims Fund. The Department of Justice disburses money from this Fund to States and other entities to support victim compensation and assistance programs. It is important to note that the Fund receives no tax dollars.

Since fiscal year 2000, Congress has capped the amount of money disbursed from the Crime Victims Fund. The cap was originally intended to establish a more stable stream of funding. But the cap on money disbursed from the Fund has remained low, even as the amount of money going into the Fund has risen dramatically. The result: Billions of dollars that should have been used to assist victims of domestic violence, rape, child abuse, and other crimes have instead been used as an offset to pay for other discretionary spending projects. We were very pleased when, last year, Congress raised the cap for fiscal year 2015. This was welcome news and we greatly appreciate this progress.

That said, we believe more needs to be done.

The *Fairness for Victims of Crime Act* *of 2015* provides many needed reforms to the Crime Victims Fund. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation:

* provides a steady, predictable stream of funding by requiring that, each year, the Department of Justice disburse from the Fund the average of the past 3 years’ intake—an estimated $2.6 billion for fiscal year 2016;
* dramatically increases compensation paid directly to victims by an estimated $25 million each year;
* creates, for the first time, a dedicated funding stream for tribes where the need for victim services is especially great;

Even more important to CACs, the bill also updates the list of eligible reimbursements to also include forensic interviews. Forensic interviews are the cornerstone of the CAC and are important not just to begin the criminal investigation, but also to begin the process for victim healing

It is for these above reasons that we wholeheartedly support the *Fairness to Victims of Crime Act of 2015* and ask you to cosponsor this critical bill.