

Victims of Child Abuse Act Reauthorization 2018

The *Victims of Child Abuse Act*, first passed in 1990, provides federal funding for the development of Children's Advocacy Centers, and for the training and technical assistance for CACs and their multidisciplinary team partners. This program is the cornerstone of the CAC movement, and is the only federal program solely dedicated to CACs.

The primary mission of a CAC is to prevent further victimization by ensuring that child abuse investigations are comprehensive, and that intervention and healing services meet the age appropriate needs of the child. Communities that use CACs and multidisciplinary teams:

- Have a far higher conviction rate for CAC cases that are carried forward.
- Ensure that child victims of sexual abuse are four times more likely to receive medical care and increased referrals for mental health treatment than children served by non-CAC communities.
- Can be found in every type of community from urban, suburban, and rural communities to Native American tribes.
- Provide services to children from 0-18, with nearly 40% of the children served being younger than 6 years old.

Since 1992, federal funding has helped establish and maintain more than 900 CACs and State Chapters throughout the United States, and the number of children helped by CACs has more than tripled in recent years, growing from 100,539 in 2000 to almost 335,000 in 2017.

Victims of Child Abuse Act Reauthorization Act of 2018

Congress *unanimously* reauthorized this program in 2014; however, it is set to expire this year. With that in mind, US Senators Roy Blunt (R-MO) and Chris Coons (D-DE), and US Representatives Ted Poe (R-TX) and Jim Costa (D-CA) recently introduced the bipartisan *Victims of Child Abuse Act Reauthorization Act of 2018* (HR 5955/S 2961). This reauthorization effort updates the statute to better reflect how CACs are currently serving families, and increases the authorized funding level to \$25 million. Increasing the federal funding level will provide a meaningful infusion of resources that can make an enormous impact on the children served by CACs every day.

Current Senate Sponsors: US Senators Roy Blunt (R-MO), Chris Coons (D-DE), Todd Young (R-IN), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Richard Burr (R-NC), Mike Rounds (R-SD), Deb Fischer (R-NE), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Bob Casey (D-PA), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Roger Wicker (R-MS), Cindy Hyde-Smith (D-MS), John Cornyn (R-TX), Doug Jones (D-AL), Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Tom Tillis (R-NC) and Dean Heller (R-NV).

Current House Sponsors: US Representatives Ted Poe (R-TX), Jim Costa (D-CA), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Bruce Poliquin (R-ME), Anthony Brown (D-MD), Eric Swalwell (D-CA), Luke Messer (R-IN), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), Ann Kuster (D-NH), Steve Cohen (D-TN), Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), Ann Wagner (R-MO), Theodore Deutch (D-FL), Debbie Dingell (D-MI), Hakeem Jefferies (D-NY), Andy Harris (R-MD), Greg Gianforte (R-MT), Rep. Andy Barr (R-KY), Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD), Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL), Rep. Brian Higgins (D-NY), Rep. Dan Lipinski (D-IL) and Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL).

The bill is backed by National Children's Alliance, National Children's Advocacy Center, National District Attorney's Association, Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, the North East Regional Children's Advocacy Center, the Midwest Regional Children's Advocacy Center, the Southern Regional Children's Advocacy Center, the Western Regional Children's Advocacy Center, the National Sheriff's Association, the National Association of Police Officers, the Fraternal Order of Police, the Major County Sheriff's Association, and the Sergeants Benevolent Association.

We urge Congress to cosponsor HR 5955/S 2961, and quickly pass this critical legislation. To sign onto S 2961, please contact Courtney Houston-Carter with Sen. Blunt (4-5721) or Andy Crawford with Sen. Coons (4-5042.) To sign onto HR 5955, please contact Kristina Thompson with Rep. Poe (5-6565) or Jared Feldman with Rep. Costa (5-3341). For any additional questions, contact Denise Edwards, with National Children's Alliance, at dedwards@nca-online.org.