



U.S. Congressional Recess August 2019

NCJFCJ MEMBERS MEETINGS AT HOME WITH YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVE

NCJFCJ Members,

Please join your fellow NCJFCJ members in contacting Members of Congress and elected officials during the August congressional recess.

Reaching out while Members of Congress are home for their in-district work period helps to educate them about the work of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and critical federal programs that assist state and tribal courts and justice systems improve outcomes for children, families, and victims of domestic violence and domestic child sex trafficking. By sharing information about the work of NCJFCJ, which includes a focus on helping children and families that appear in your courtrooms heal from trauma, is needed to help ensure continued federal support and further understanding of the federal role in addressing these issues.

In addition, we encourage you to **invite your Members of Congress and staff to observe court** as the experience helps them (many whom have never been in court) understand the highly complex issues that come before you further illustrating that a case is never as simple as it appears, and there is not one solution for the children and families seeking justice.

Be sure to offer yourself and the NCJFCJ as a resource to Members and their staff as they work on issues impacting children, families, and victims. This same outreach is important and encouraged with your Governor and members of your state legislature. The goal is to position NCJFCJ as a resource to your work as well as your elected officials.

NCJFCJ's priority federal legislative requests are found below. This serves as recommended talking points when you meet with your Senators and Representative. To access and share NCJFCJ's state profiles and overview of our subject area work, visit <http://www.ncjfcj.org/policyinfo>.

The NCJFCJ appreciates all you do, and we look forward to hearing about your visits and conversations with your Members and elected officials. You can report on your visits to NCJFCJ CEO Joey Orduna Hastings at jhastings@ncjfcj.org.

How to contact your elected officials:

U.S. Senate – visit <https://www.senate.gov/> and select Contact under the Senators menu. You will find your Senators' local office contact information via their webpages. When you call ask to speak with the State Director.

House of Representatives – visit <https://www.house.gov/representatives> to look up your Representative's local office contact information. When you call ask to speak with the District Director.

Congress Please Support the Following!

Department of Justice competitive grant programs; fiscal year FY 2020 Commerce, Justice, and Science (CJS) Appropriations Requests

- *OJJDP Child Abuse Training for Judicial Personnel*; there is no other existing federally supported grant program available that provides specialized training and needed resources to juvenile and family courts. This discretionary grant program supports training, technical assistance, and research for courts that help to improve outcomes for child abuse and neglect victims, dual status youth, victims of domestic child sex trafficking and dependency court system reform.
- *OVW Grants to Support Families in the Justice System*; combines VAWA Court Training and Improvement and Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange programs and helps judges address the broad range of concerns family violence and child abuse may present while improving the court's response to all aspects of the civil and criminal justice system on behalf of families impacted by these crimes. It enables courts to develop or enhance infrastructure; community-based initiatives within the court system; and offender management, monitoring, and accountability programs for crimes of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.
- *JJDPA Act programs*; JJDPA was reauthorized at the end of the 115th Congress which brings this critical law up-to-date with evidence based practices and research. Under this law states are being asked to do more to receive federal formula grants under Title II of the Act. In addition, Title V, PROMISE grants, is the only federal program that provides delinquency prevention funding at the local level to reach at-risk youth and help keep them out of the system.

These grant programs serve as a critical backbone to our nation's response to family violence and child welfare matters. The House passed HR 3055 which includes \$4M for Training for Judicial Personnel on Child Abuse and Neglect; \$22M for Grants to Support Families in the Justice System; and close to \$350M for juvenile justice programs for FY 2020. **Ask your Senators to support the House approved funding levels for these DOJ programs.**

Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

The House passed a bipartisan bill, HR 1585, on April 4th. **Ask your Senators to pass a bill substantially similar to HR 1585 with no rollbacks or poison pills.** To access talking points and other materials and information prepared by the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence visit <http://www.4vawa.org/ntf-action-alerts-and-news>.

Reauthorization of the Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA)

FVPSA provides core funding to support programs, including shelter, to over 1.3 million domestic violence victims and their families. In the Senate, Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) are taking the lead on introducing a bill to reauthorize FVPSA with critical enhancements supported by stakeholders. In the House, champions have yet to be identified. **Ask your Senators and Representative to support a reauthorization of FVPSA with critical enhancements and increases for prevention efforts as well as survivors' access to vital programs and services that address unmet needs for all victims.**

Reauthorization of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

HR 2480, Stronger Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, was passed by the House. The Act was introduced by Congresswoman Kim Schrier (D-WA) and Congressman James Comer (R-KY) with support of Education and Labor Committee Chairman Bobby Scott (D-VA) and Ranking Member Virginia Foxx (R-NC). There are increases in funding levels for both Title I - General Program and Title II - Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. **Ask your Senators to pass a companion bill to HR 2480.**

Also, don't forget to **thank your Members of Congress for their continued support and efforts on behalf of children, families and victims of domestic violence and domestic child sex trafficking.**