



**U.S. Congressional Recess
August 2021**

**NCJFCJ MEMBER MEETINGS AT HOME
WITH YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVE**

Dear 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 NCJFCJ and the critical role juvenile and family court judges are playing during these challenging times to improve the outcomes for children, families, and victims of domestic violence and domestic child sex trafficking. Information-sharing about the work of the 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.

As the oldest judicial training organization in the country, the NCJFCJ has provided judicial officers, courts, and court-related agencies nationwide with the education, technical assistance, and research they need to improve the lives of those who seek fair, equal, effective, and timely justice with the support of federal program funds. When contacting your congressional delegation be sure to share specific information as to how you are currently serving families in need and the challenges you are facing to: keep children safe from child abuse and neglect; strengthen response and intervention systems to meet the challenges of COVID-19; meet the needs of older youth already in, or transitioning out of, the foster care system; protect the safety of youth being held in juvenile detention centers; and protect families against violence in the home.

In addition, offer yourself and the [NCJFCJ's COVID resources](#) 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 the NCJFCJ as a resource to their work as well as to your elected officials. As courts across the country begin to reopen, we encourage you to invite your Members of Congress and staff to observe your court as the experience helps them (many of whom have never been in court) understand the highly complex issues which come before you, further illustrating a case is never as simple as it appears.

The NCJFCJ's federal legislative requests in addition to FY2022 funding requests are stated below and may serve as recommended talking points when you reach out to your Senators and

Representative. To access and share the NCJFCJ's state profiles and overview of our subject area work, visit <https://www.ncjfcj.org/national-impact/>.

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 Orduña 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; FY 2022 Commerce, Justice, and Science (CJS) Appropriations Requests

- *OJJDP Child Abuse Training for Judicial Personnel*; there is no other existing federally supported grant program available which provides specialized training and needed resources to juvenile and family courts. This discretionary grant program supports training, technical assistance, and research for courts which 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.

These grant programs serve as a critical backbone to our nation's response to family violence and child welfare matters. This is an exciting time to build on the momentum for the proposed increases for these programs in President Biden's FY2022 budget which was presented to Congress on Friday, May 27. Specifically, the budget calls for \$6 million for the Child Abuse Training Program for Judicial Personnel (\$3.5 million current funding) and \$28 million for the Grants to Support Families in the Justice System (\$18 million current funding). These funding levels are even higher than what the NCJFCJ advocated for during the Days on the Hill event, which were \$5 million and \$22 million respectively. **Ask your Senators and Representative to support the proposed funding levels for these DOJ programs.**

Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

The House passed a bipartisan bill, HR 1620, on March 17, 2021. This bill reauthorizes through FY2026. The Senate continues to work on introducing a bipartisan bill. **Ask your Senator to support the bipartisan bill when introduced.**

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. Bipartisan reauthorization bills have been introduced in the House and Senate. They are companion bills. **Ask your Representative to cosponsor H.R. 2119**, Family Violence Prevention and Services Improvement Act, introduced by Representatives Lucy McBath (D-GA), Don Young (R-AK), Gwen Moore (D-WI), and John Katko (R-NY). **Ask your Senators to cosponsor S. 1275**, introduced by Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).

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

HR 485, Stronger Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, was passed by the House on March 16, 2021. The Act was introduced by Representatives Bobby Scott (D-VA), James Comer (R-KY), Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Haley Stevens (D-MI), Elisa Stefanik (R-NY), Kim Schrier (D-WA), and Dusty Johnson (R-SD). This bill reauthorizes through FY2027.

On June 10, 2021, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee marked up and passed S. 1927, CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2021. It was introduced by Senators Patty Murray (D-WA) and Richard Burr (R-NC). The bill now awaits action by the full Senate.

Once it does pass, it will need to be conferenced with the House bill to resolve differences and then sent on to the President's desk for his signature. **Make sure your Senator knows you are supportive of the bill passed by the HELP Committee and that floor action is needed quickly.**

Don't forget to thank you Members of Congress for their continued support and efforts on behalf of children, families, and victims of domestic violence and domestic child sex trafficking. For more information regarding the NCJFCJ Legislative Committee and its efforts, please contact Lauren Morris, Board and Committee Coordinator, at (775) 507-4813 or lmorris@ncjfcj.org.