



**U.S. Congressional Recess
August 2022**

**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 federal policy-makers understand these issues and support judicial training programs.

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; 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; strengthen response and intervention systems to meet the challenges of COVID-19; and protect families against violence in the home.

In addition, offer yourself 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. We encourage you to invite your Members of Congress and their 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 FY2023 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/>. In addition, [NCJFCJ's COVID resources are also available.](#)

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 2023 Commerce, Justice, and Science (CJS) Appropriations Requests

--\$6 million for *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. (this funding level reflects the President’s FY2023 Budget Request)

--\$28 million for *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. (this funding level reflects the President’s FY2023 Budget Request)

These grant programs serve as a critical backbone to our nation’s response to family violence and child welfare matters. We need to continue to build on the momentum for the proposed increases in these programs. The [House Commerce-Justice-Science \(CJS\) Appropriations](#) bill recommends increases for judicial training programs: \$4.5 million was provided for the Child Abuse Training Program for Judicial Personnel (\$4 million current funding) and \$22 million for the Grants to Support Families in the Justice System (\$20 million current funding). The Senate Appropriations Committee may move their legislation in July. **Ask your Senators and Representatives to support increased funding levels for these DOJ programs.**

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, bicameral reauthorization bills have been introduced in the House and Senate. The House passed H.R. 2119, Family Violence Prevention and Services Improvement Act, on a bipartisan basis in October 2021. The Senate companion measure-- authored by Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)--is still pending consideration in the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee. **Ask your Senators to cosponsor S. 1275.**

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

The House has passed bipartisan legislation in March 2021--HR 485, Stronger Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act--to reauthorize CAPTA programs through FY2027.

In November 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 the Senate legislation passes the Senate floor, 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.

117th CONGRESS--LEGISLATION PASSED

Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (aka "Gun Reform") (P.L. 117-159)

President Biden signed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act into law on June 25, 2022, the first "gun reform" legislation in over 30 years. The bill bolsters gun safety measures through expanded background checks, restricts certain individuals from owning firearms, and provides incentives for states to enact "red-flag" programs.

This legislation includes [juvenile and mental health records](#) in background checks for purchasers ages 18-21.

It narrowed the boyfriend loophole by prohibiting--for at least five years--someone convicted of a misdemeanor domestic violence crime (as part of a dating relationship) from purchasing or possessing a firearm; it defined a dating partner based on Texas state law.

The bill also provides \$4.640 billion in additional funding for key programs. The Department of Justice (\$1.6 billion) has increased funding for state and law enforcement assistance programs (e.g., Byrne JAG). The Department of Health and Human Services was provided \$990 million for mental health funding. And the Department of Education received \$2.05 billion for school supports and safety.

Senators Chris Murphy (D-CT), John Cornyn (R-TX), Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) and Thom Tillis (R-NC) led negotiations and the bill passed with the support of 15 GOP Senators. For a summary of the legislation, click [here](#) and bill text can be found [here](#).

Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) (P.L. 117-103)

President Biden [signed the reauthorization of VAWA 2022](#) into law as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022 (H.R. 2471) in March 2022. The act reauthorized current VAWA programs through 2027 and in many cases increased authorized funding levels.

Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2022 (P.L. 117-103)

The [Consolidated Appropriations Act](#) was signed into law in March 2022 and contained funding increases for key judicial training programs: \$4 million was provided in FY22 for the Child Abuse Training Program for Judicial Personnel and \$20 million in FY22 for the Grants to Support Families in the Justice System. NCJFCJ will continue to advocate for judicial training programs through the Congressional Appropriations process as well as through engagement with the Administration.