



Fwd: CCASA supports SB 20-070 Traffic Offense Classification And Penalties

Julie Gonzales to: Elizabeth Burger

03/10/2020 03:20 PM

9 attachments



2015-RAPE-CRISIS-CENTER-SURVEY.pdf



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Senator Julie Gonzales

senatorjuliegonzales@gmail.com

(o) 303.866.4862

(c) 720.891.2712

Office: 200 East Colfax, Suite 339 (Third Floor, Southeast Corner)

Mail: 200 East Colfax, Suite 346, Denver, CO 80203

she/her/hers

Begin forwarded message:

From: Raana Simmons <raana@ccasa.org>

Date: March 10, 2020 at 7:38:40 AM MDT

To: "pete.lee.senate@state.co.us" <pete.lee.senate@state.co.us>,
 "julie.gonzales.senate@state.co.us" <julie.gonzales.senate@state.co.us>,
 "paul.lundeen.senate@state.co.us" <paul.lundeen.senate@state.co.us>,
 "jack.tate.senate@state.co.us" <jack.tate.senate@state.co.us>,
 "nancy.todd.senate@state.co.us" <nancy.todd.senate@state.co.us>,
 "rob.woodward.senate@state.co.us" <rob.woodward.senate@state.co.us>

Cc: "don.coram.senate@state.co.us" <don.coram.senate@state.co.us>, Larry Hudson
 <larry@hudsonsonga.com>

Subject: CCASA supports SB 20-070 Traffic Offense Classification And Penalties

Good morning Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I'm writing to express the Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault's (CCASA) support of SB 20-070, specifically the provision that would provide funding for community-based victim advocacy programs that meet the qualifications described in CRS §13-90-107(1)(k).

Colorado is one of only a small number of states that does not provide general fund dollars for

community-based sexual assault victim advocacy programs. Sexual assault does not have a specific designation within the tax-checkoff program nor do sexual assault programs benefit from the fines and fees placed on marriage licenses in the way that domestic violence programs do.

Victim's Compensation is essentially an exclusive funding structure where funding is distributed to the smallest number of survivors – by design. Vast research has found consistently that sexual assaults are reported at alarmingly low rates. It is estimated that 63 percent of sexual assaults are not reported to police, yet Victim's Compensation requires cooperation with the criminal legal system to access the monetary resources necessary for victims to rebuild their lives after surviving sexual abuse.

Community-based victim advocacy programs provide a range of ongoing services, beyond just assistance through the criminal justice process, including access to therapy and support groups, and assistance in accessing other services (e.g., civil legal system, housing, education, work accommodations), as well as prevention education. Whereas, systems-based victim assistant programs provide services solely limited to the criminal justice process.

Finally, federal funding through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) requires a 20% match and without a source of non-federal funds – such as what SB 20-070 would provide – community-based victim advocacy programs are often limited in the amount they can request. Whereas, systems-based victim assistant programs can draw on local taxes as match.

The federal government has recognized that sexual assault services specifically are underfunded. While Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) funds exist for domestic violence services exclusively, there is no similar source of funding for sexual assault services. Even when funding is designated for both domestic violence and sexual assault, the vast majority still gets allocated for domestic violence, rather than sexual assault. As such, that is why the Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) was created within the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which has helped lessen the inequity somewhat. However, funding specifically for sexual assault services is still woefully lacking. Now with the rise of the #MeToo movement, even more sexual assault victims are seeking services.

As you can see from the Local VALE Grant Award report below, sexual assault receives the least amount of funding. The distribution of funds is dependent on the viewpoints of the particular members of each local VALE board.

See the 2018 Local VALE Grant Award report – table and graph on page 4:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_LvMU1-8QnQCWD9dWTLrXAhSOmlgdKcl/view.

- General Victim Services (not DV/SA) \$2,701,248 (20.8%)
- Child Victim Programs \$2,180,664 (16.8%)
- Domestic Violence Programs \$2,045,011 (15.8%)
- District Attorney's Office \$1,595,326 (12.3%)
- Law Enforcement – Sheriff Departments \$1,129,810 (8.7%)
- Law Enforcement – Police Departments \$994,059 (7.7%)
- Sexual Assault \$998,653 (7.7%)

Additionally, I quickly requested the following information and heard back from three of Colorado's community-based rape crisis centers concerning the number of sexual assault victims they provided victim advocacy services to in 2018:

- SARA, Inc. that serves the entire 13th JD (Fort Morgan and surrounding areas) provided services to **416 victims** in 2018
- The Blue Bench that serves the 1st, 2nd, 17th, 18th, and 19th JDs (Denver metro area) provided services to **3,623 victims** in 2018
- SASO that serves the 6th JD (Durango and surrounding areas) provided services **410 victims** in 2018

For context, these three rape crisis centers alone provided services to more victims of sexual assault than what was reported to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) for sex offenses reported to law enforcement throughout the entire state of Colorado in 2018. Combined, these three rape crisis centers alone provided services to 4,449 victims whereas law enforcement reported 4,194 instances of sex offenses during the same time period. There are over 40 community-based victim advocacy programs that meet the qualifications described in CRS §13-90-107(1)(k) operating in Colorado.

This section of the bill is not regulating control from the local VALE boards. Instead, it would provide much needed funding to community-based victim advocacy programs to provide literal life-saving services and allow CO to have a more balanced approach to funding services beyond the criminal justice system. This is one way to build capacity throughout the state for sexual assault services, which is critically underfunded both at the state and federal levels.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this email. If you have any questions about the information provided, please feel free to contact me directly.

Warm wishes,
Raana

Raana Simmons, MPA
she/her/hers
Director of Policy
Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CCASA)

1330 Fox Street, Suite 2
PO Box 40350
Denver, CO 80204

303.839.9999 (office)
303.625.9564 (direct)

www.ccasa.org

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The Need for Funding at Rape Crisis Centers

Programs are unable to maintain staff

45% 

Almost half of programs experienced an overall decrease in funding over the past year.

36% 

Over 1/3 experienced a decrease in staffing over the past year.

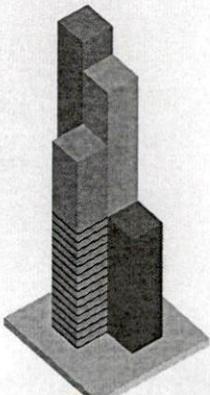
"Without VOCA funding all survivors of sexual violence will be underserved."

- An Advocate from West Virginia

"Now is not the time to be cutting back on funding, forcing us to turn away survivors who are finding their voices for the first time..."

- An Advocate from California

Effect on communities



- 46% of programs have an MOU with campuses
- 13% of those are funded
- 57% MOU with prison or jail
- 13% MOU military base
- 80% of those with 1 or more MOU—no payment is included in MOUs

MOU - agreement about how the two organizations will partner.

Victims are unable to access services

1/3 of programs had to decrease hours of service for individual and/or group counseling.



Almost half have a waiting list for general counseling services.¹



3 - 100

The number of survivors on waiting lists for counseling.

2 - 12 Weeks

Wait times for survivors.



1/3 of programs responding have two FTEs² or fewer responding to the direct services needs of survivors of sexual assault.

¹Defined as not being able to make an individual appointment for a survivors within 1 week.

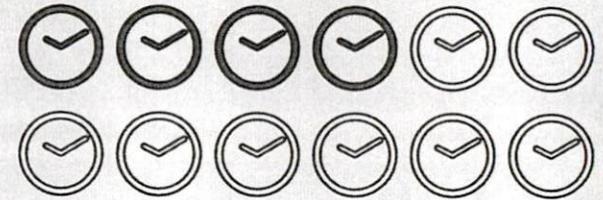
²Full time employee

³Defined as not being able to set up a program within a month.

Prevention is side-lined



Almost half decreased public awareness and/or prevention services to their communities.



Over 1/3 have a waiting list for prevention programs.³

"So much healing came with every session until I felt strong again."

- A Survivor from Florida

"It's noble to provide direct services to victims of sexual violence, but if we don't provide prevention monies, then we are just a band-aid."

- An Advocate from Nebraska

It's time to increase funding for survivor services and prevention.



National Alliance to End Sexual Violence