



## **PRESIDENT BUSH REQUESTS FUNDING CUTS THAT ENDANGER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS**

### ***Advocates urge Congress to protect funding for life-saving services***

(February 5, 2008) *Washington, DC* – Domestic violence advocates are outraged by President Bush’s Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2009, saying the measure deals a devastating blow to women and children. The Budget Request released yesterday proposes cutting \$120 million from life-saving domestic violence services created by the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

“We are appalled to see the President proposing such devastating cuts to vital programs that save American lives,” said Sue Else, President of the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV). “VAWA has been proven to save millions of lives and over \$15 billion in health care, law enforcement, other social costs. It is fiscally irresponsible to propose such cuts and it turns a blind eye to the most vulnerable citizens of our country.”

In addition to cutting VAWA funding by one-third, the President’s plan eliminates the \$2 billion balance in the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund, a non-taxpayer funded resource serving over 3 million crime victims each year. The VOCA Fund has made it possible for domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse victims to receive critical support. It also has been used to provide counseling services to victims of terrorism and mass violence, including \$68.1 million to support the victims of the September 11 terrorism attacks.

“The VOCA Fund is not funded by taxpayer dollars. It is funded through fines and penalties collected from convicted criminals,” explained Else. “Abolishing the VOCA Fund is an insult and injustice to battered women and victims of crime across the country.”

The President’s disturbing budget cuts come on the heels of NNEDV’s release of the National Census of Domestic Violence Services (NCDVS). According to the census, in just one day, domestic violence programs did not have the resources to meet 7,707 requests for emergency shelter, legal assistance or other advocacy services. When the resources do not exist for victims to receive domestic violence services, victims are left with no choice but to return to their abusers.

“The more resources and advocacy that victims receive, the better chance they have of breaking the cycle of violence. Cuts in funding cost lives,” explained a domestic violence program in Missouri.

“VAWA changed the landscape for victims who suffered in silence,” added Else. “However, if the President’s budget cuts remain, victims will not have a place to turn for help and innocent lives will be lost. We urge Congress to restore VAWA funding and increase it to levels that will protect victims of domestic violence.”

To learn more about the President’s Budget Request and how it impacts domestic violence victims, please visit <http://www.nnedv.org>.

### **About the National Network to End Domestic Violence**

The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) is a membership and advocacy organization representing the 54 state and U.S. territory domestic violence coalitions. NNEDV is the voice of these coalitions, their more than 2,000 local domestic violence member programs, and the millions of domestic violence survivors who turn to them for services. In 2000 and 2005, NNEDV members all across the country played a crucial role in the reauthorization of VAWA. Through its extensive state and grassroots network, NNEDV continues to mobilize a powerful constituency to make their voices heard in Congress. For more information, please visit [www.nnedv.org](http://www.nnedv.org).

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