

United States Senate

May 22, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairman Leahy:

Thank you for your leadership as our country addresses the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis. We write to request that any forthcoming coronavirus relief legislation include \$50 million to be appropriated for Family Justice Centers under 34 U.S.C. § 10461(10).

While the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* made important investments in the Family Violence Prevention Services Act and the National Domestic Violence Hotline, the bill did not include financial support for Family Justice Centers under 34 U.S.C. § 10461(10). Family Justice Centers are designed to bring victim advocates, civil legal attorneys, legal advocates, government victim assistance, prosecutors, law enforcement, and representatives from community-based organizations into one centralized location. At Family Justice Centers, survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and elder abuse have access to critically important wraparound resources. Survivors can receive assistance in obtaining temporary restraining orders, finding safe housing, meeting prosecutors, working with detectives, and obtaining forensic exams.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Family Justice Centers have seen a dramatic increase in domestic violence cases, with Centers across the country reporting increases of 20 to 30 percent in requests for services. Therefore, we request that forthcoming legislation provide \$50 million for the purpose specified in 34 U.S.C. § 10461(10).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator