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March 19, 2025

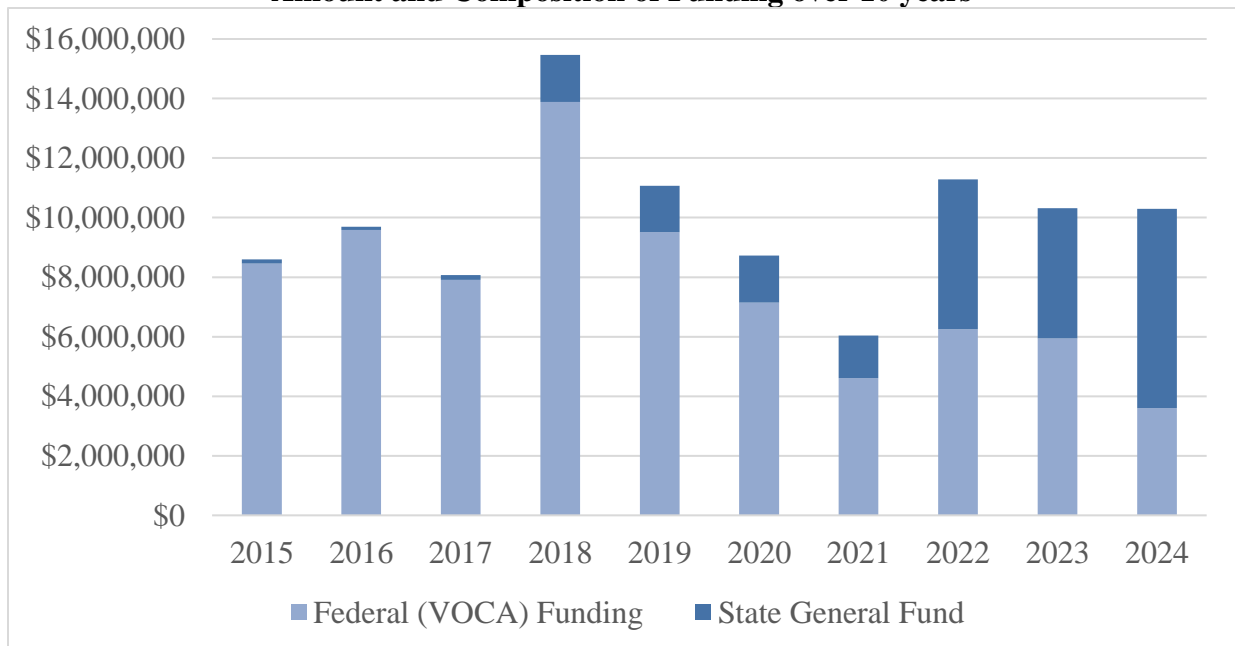
Senator Ingwersen, Chair
Representative Meyer, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 875 – *An Act to Fund Essential Services for Victims of Domestic Violence*

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, thank you for the opportunity to provide information neither for nor against LD 875, *An Act to Fund Essential Services for Victims of Domestic Violence*.

LD 875 would provide general fund appropriation for domestic abuse services. These services, which have historically been primarily funded with federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds, are delivered under a contract administered by OCFS' Violence Intervention and Response program. As discussed in OCFS' orientation presentation at the start of the session, the VOCA funding awarded by the federal government has been declining over the past few years. Below is a chart reflecting the changing funding landscape for all Violence Intervention and Response services over the last ten years.

Amount and Composition of Funding over 10 years

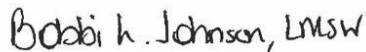


While OCFS takes no position on the allocation of general fund dollars to support domestic violence services, it is important for the Committee to be aware that VOCA award amounts are not expected to increase in the foreseeable future. While the funding appropriated under LD 875 will provide some financial relief to providers, OCFS believes the larger issues regarding the financial support of all programs funded by VOCA needs to be examined and addressed with an eye towards long-term sustainability of programs and services. There is a [comprehensive assessment of victim needs](#), commissioned by the Department and completed in 2022 that may be helpful in informing decisions about allocating resources.

Declining VOCA funding does create concern about the sustainability of the full array of services that currently exist. It is also important to note that the state contribution to this funding has increased in recent years. It is deeply unfortunate that the Federal Government has not sufficiently maintained its commitment to these services, and it puts Maine in the tough position of having to consider whether it is able to fill this gap.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions during your deliberation of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bobbi L. Johnson, LMSW". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bobbi L. Johnson, LMSW
Director
Office of Child and Family Services
Maine Department of Health and Human Services