

Senate Bill No. 2015
House Appropriations Committee – Human Resources Division
Jill McDonald
March 10, 2025

Chairman Nelson and members of the House Appropriations Committee,

My name is Jill McDonald and I am the Executive Director of the Domestic Violence Crisis Center (DVCC) serving McHenry, Pierce, Renville, and Ward Counties. Our organization is a member of the North Dakota Domestic & Sexual Violence Coalition and a VOCA grant subrecipient.

I am writing in support of the VOCA supplemental funding included in SB2015 for victim services grants. This year, DVCC was awarded \$328,466 to provide a broad range of services to victims of domestic and sexual violence.

VOCA funds provide for staff to answer crisis calls from first responders or victims. They also provide 24/7 coverage for our emergency shelter. DVCC's shelter is the only shelter in a 100 mile radius of Minot for the people we serve. These critical funds enable the staff to respond to the Emergency Room and provide emotional support while a victim meets with a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) and patrol officer. That same Advocate may assist the survivor with a Sexual Assault Restraining Order or a Protection Order. DVCC staff will attend the hearings and provide support through the entire criminal justice process. Most people don't know what to expect when it comes to the criminal justice system and it can be extremely helpful to have someone experienced to help navigate. These funds also allow for staff to facilitate support groups following the trauma of domestic and sexual violence. Support groups allow people where to meet with others who share the same worries, fears, concerns, and learn coping skills to heal from the trauma they experienced. Finally, VOCA funds also provide for therapy services to foster resilience and healing.

Without the financial support that VOCA offers to agencies like DVCC, domestic and sexual violence emergency shelter services would be difficult to offer. Providing emergency shelter means having staff coverage 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Each of the programs mentioned above would be impacted. In a nutshell DVCC would lose 2.0 FTE's in Shelter, 1.5 FTE's

in advocacy/support groups, and .25 FTE therapy who provides hundreds of hours of therapy for survivors, in addition to our supervision team overseeing the award and staff activities. Our agency is considered a mid size crisis center. We have 20 full time staff and 2-5 part time staff at any given time. If we were to lose essentially four staff members for our programs, it would be debilitating. Our communities don't have alternatives for victims that need emergency shelter after being assaulted. Much like our first responder counterparts, people rely on us to be available when their crisis occurs.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jill McDonald

Executive Director

Domestic Violence Crisis Center

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