

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 13, 2020

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable José E. Serrano  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lowey, Ranking Member Granger, Chairman Serrano, and Ranking Member Aderholt:

We write to thank the subcommittee for its continued support for the Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) by fully funding programs established by the Victims of Child Abuse Act. The Victims of Child Abuse Act authorizes funding for CACs, permits the Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to establish grants designed to improve child abuse investigation and prosecution programs, and provides grants to national organizations to better train attorneys and other individuals instrumental to prosecuting child abuse cases. All funding is competitively awarded and is the cornerstone for new CAC development and expansion, while also acting as a catalyst for other federal, state, local, and private funding sources. With this in mind, we respectfully request that you again support this critically important program and urge you to fund the program at a minimum of \$40 million in the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2021.

CACs provide an efficient, cost-effective mechanism for handling cases of severe child abuse, and are strongly supported by law enforcement, prosecutors, and the judiciary. The funding for this program goes directly to local CACs around the country in the form of grants for program support, and for training and technical assistance. Since 1992, more than 900 Local CAC and State Chapters have been established in communities across the country and in more than 25 countries throughout the world. The number of children helped by CACs has more than tripled in recent years, growing from 100,539 in 2000 to almost 366,000 in 2019. Unfortunately, according to the Department of Health and Human Services' recent annual Child Maltreatment Report, there is a gap of an additional 600,000+ cases of suspected abuse that need a CAC forensic

interview and aren't getting one, and an estimated 300,000 additional cases of substantiated abuse with no access to a CAC at all.

Children's Advocacy Centers are community-based public-private partnerships that emphasize the coordination of child abuse investigations and intervention services by bringing together professionals and agencies as a multidisciplinary team. Although they receive public funds, CACs are primarily private, non-profit, 501(c) 3 organizations that are largely funded through private donations. A recent cost-benefit analysis estimates that child abuse investigations using CACs can save as much as \$1,000/child, meaning last year, CACs saved \$366 million nationwide.

The primary mission of a CAC is to prevent further victimization by ensuring that investigations are comprehensive and meet the age appropriate needs of the child. Communities that use CACs and multidisciplinary teams have a 94% conviction rate for CAC cases that are carried forward, and child victims of sexual abuse are four times more likely to receive forensic medical exams and increased referrals for mental health treatment than children served by non-CAC communities. Children's Advocacy Centers can be found in every type of community from urban, suburban, and rural communities to Native American tribes. CACs provide services to children from birth to age 18, with nearly 40% of the children served being younger than 6 years old. As important as intervention is to alleviate the suffering of these children, efforts to prevent child sexual abuse in the first place is equally important. Last year, CACs provided child sexual abuse prevention training to more than 4.26 million individuals, many in a school setting.

We understand that this is again an extremely difficult budget year and want to thank the subcommittee for consistently funding programs established by the Victims of Child Abuse Act. We are confident that funding programs at \$40 million in FY21 will reflect increased community needs, allow CACs to continue serving child abuse victims nationwide, and provide opportunities for children to begin healing and move forward with their lives.

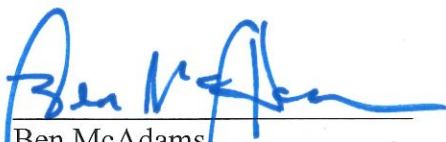
Thank you for your leadership in this critical area and for your consideration of this request.



Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



Pete Olson  
Member of Congress



Ben McAdams  
Member of Congress



Ann Wagner  
Member of Congress

Brian K. Fitzpatrick

Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress

Val B. Demings

Val B. Demings  
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Steve Cohen  
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Dina Titus  
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Bill Foster

Bill Foster  
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Anthony G. Brown

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Gerald E. Connolly

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Jennifer Wexton

Jennifer Wexton  
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis

Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster

Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



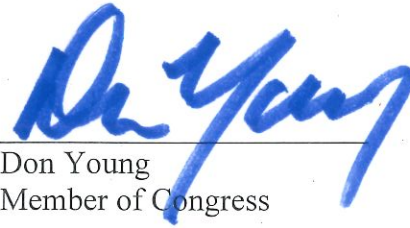
Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress



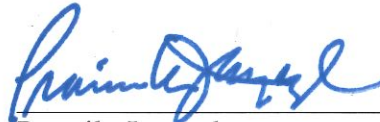
Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress



Don Young  
Member of Congress



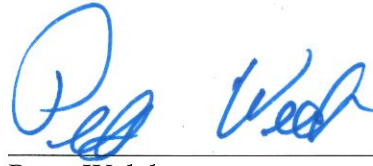
Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



Marc Veasey  
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress



Debbie Mucarsel-Powell  
Member of Congress



Stephanie Murphy  
Member of Congress



Susie Lee  
Member of Congress



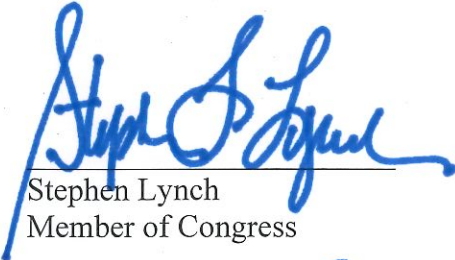
Mark Takano  
Member of Congress



Cheri Bustos  
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Denny Heck  
Member of Congress



Stephen Lynch  
Member of Congress



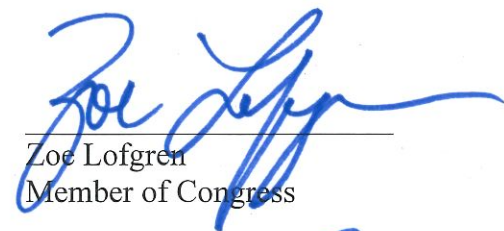
Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress



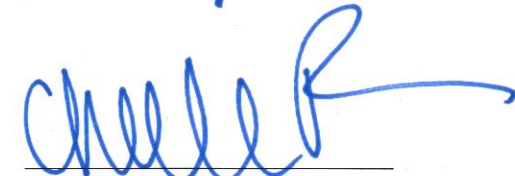
Bill Johnson  
Member of Congress



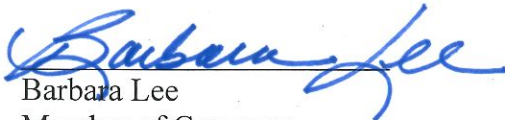
Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



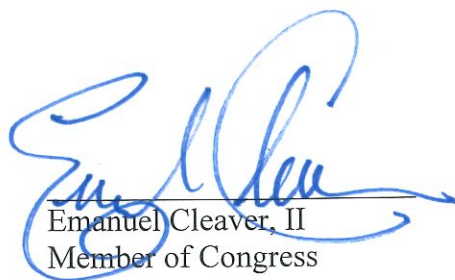
Daniel W. Lipinski  
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress

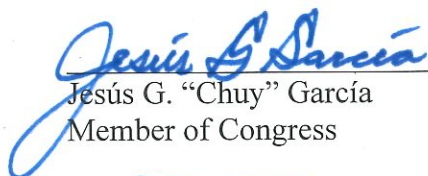


Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress



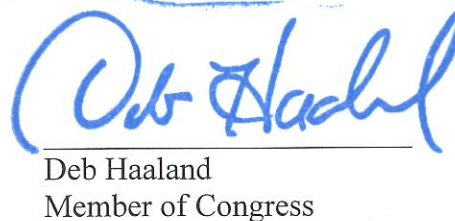
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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



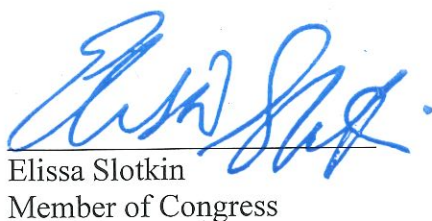
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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



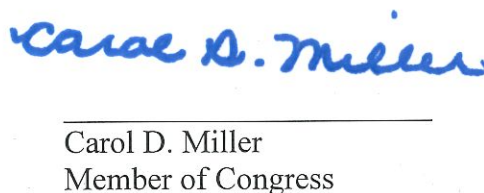
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Deb Haaland  
Member of Congress



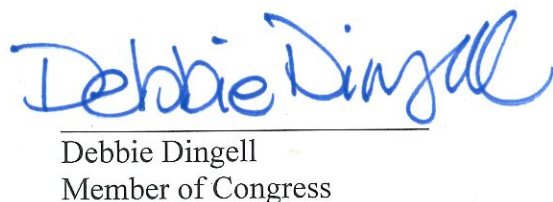
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Elissa Slotkin  
Member of Congress



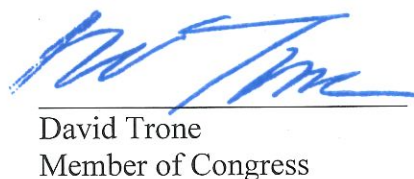
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Carol D. Miller  
Member of Congress



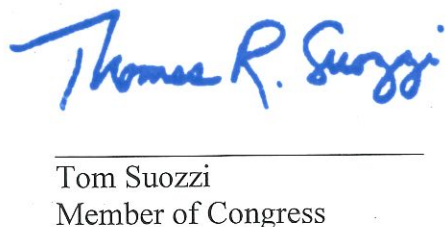
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Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



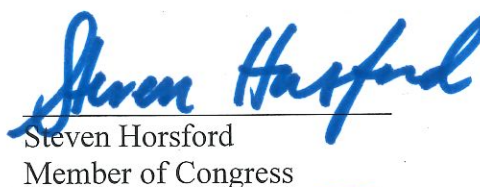
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David Trone  
Member of Congress



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Tom Suozzi  
Member of Congress



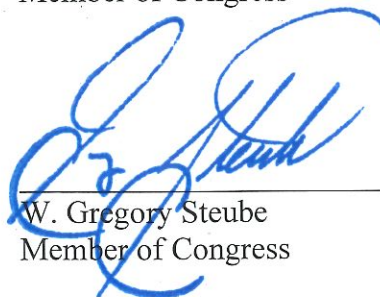
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Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress



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Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress



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W. Gregory Steube  
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress




Ben Ray Luján  
Member of Congress



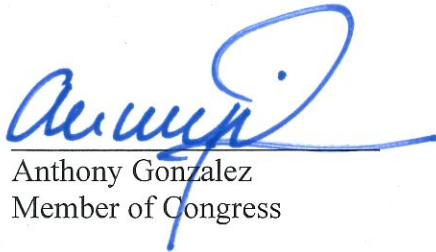
Susan Wild  
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Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
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Mo Brooks  
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Anthony Gonzalez  
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Lloyd Doggett  
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Al Lawson, Jr.  
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Mary Gay Scanlon  
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Michael Guest  
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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
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