



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 2418</b>		DATE: <b>3/3/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ANGELA K GREER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 11:15 AM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

As a former victim advocate in the State of Missouri i understood fully the impact of crime victims funding. This funding was responsible for my salary., as well as operating the the domestic violent shelter that I was responsible fot running. The dramatic cuts that were made to this year's budget will affect not only the amount of people that are available to run shelters and programs, but cut programs and bed nights available for individuals served by these programs. Please restore funding to crime victim's assistance budget



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ARNIE C. A.C. "HONEST ABE" DIENOFF</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-440-9000</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>STATE PUBLIC ADVOCACY</b>		TITLE: <b>STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>PO BOX 1535</b>			
CITY: <b>O'FALLON</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63366</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>BEATRICE CHURCH</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-222-0045</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>DEAFLEAD</b>		TITLE: <b>VICTIM ADVOCATE COORDINATOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>2505 W ASH ST.</b>			
CITY: <b>COLUMBIA</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65203</b>
EMAIL: <b>beatrice.church@deaflead.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/2/2026 10:23 AM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

My name is Beatrice Church, and I represent Missouri’s only statewide, Deaf-led, fully accessible victim service provider who is celebrating its 30 years of services. We are a small part of Missouri’s larger victim services system but a very critical part. We also are a direct service provider, serving thousands of Deaf and Hard of Hearing survivors each year through 24/7 crisis response, safety planning, court accompaniment, advocacy, and support with navigating housing, and provide interpreters at no cost - all directly in American Sign Language. The Crime Victims Fund supports a network of providers across our state who work every day to protect survivors. We work closely with domestic violence shelters, sexual assault programs, law enforcement, courthouses, and hospitals. We collaborate with them so that Deaf and Hard of Hearing survivors can access the same life-saving services as anyone else.

Many service providers rely on us to support them and fill in the gaps whereas they cannot. When they have a Deaf survivor, they call us. This is also where many the government and many service providers save money in using our interpreting services because VOCA makes this possible. We do not replace other agencies, we make their services accessible.

Missouri is known as the "Show Me State." We show up for our communities. We show leadership in times of crisis. And we show that justice means equal access for all.

Note that since October 2025, Missouri providers have already absorbed a 26.5% reduction. When funding is cut, the entire system weakens. And for our community, cuts mean something even more severe: access disappears. When accessible services are reduced, our community no longer has a clear path to safety or justice. The world becomes more silent for Deaf survivors. When silence grows, abuse continues unchecked.

If our services are cut, Deaf survivors do not simply experience reduced services, they lose access altogether. And the agencies that rely on us lose a partner.

In the Show Me State, let us show the nation that we will not allow survivors to be silenced.

We urge you to pass the Crime Victims Fund so that network of providers, large and small, can continue serving survivors with dignity and equal protections under the law.

**Thank you for your leadership and commitment to crime victims.**

**Beatrice Church  
DeafLEAD  
Victim Advocate Coordinator**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>CARA GERDIMAN</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-348-6886</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>KID's HARBOR, INC., KID's HARBOR, TOO</b>		TITLE: <b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>5717 CHAPEL DRIVE</b>			
CITY: <b>LINN CREEK</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65065</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>COURTNEY THOMAS</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>816-462-0504</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>NEWHOUSE</b>		TITLE: <b>PRESIDENT + CEO</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>660 BROOKLYN AVENUE</b>			
CITY: <b>KANSAS CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>64124</b>
EMAIL: <b>courtney@newhousekc.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/2/2026 9:19 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>EMILY STOINSKI</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/2/2026 3:17 PM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>GINA CLEMENT</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-893-2272</b>
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>CAPITAL CITY COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES</b>		TITLE: <b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>
ADDRESS: <b>600 MONROE ST., STE 100</b>		
CITY: <b>JC</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JENNIFER HOVIS</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/27/2026 4:09 PM</b>
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As a nurse practitioner and SAFE-CARE provider it is my privilege to be able to care for children and families who are the victims and witnesses of crime. I work at a child advocacy center that relies heavily on crime victims funds to be able to provide both acute and long term services to victims of crime. Federal funding has not proven to be reliable. We have recently experienced a 20% reduction in grant funding which is a considerable amount that will prohibit care to these vulnerable members of our communities.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JEREMY CHURCH</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/2/2026 12:02 PM</b>	
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My name is Jeremy Church and come from a long line of generations who served the public.

I fought for my country because I believe in protecting people and defending freedom. It is unthinkable to me that the very services that protect and save lives here at home could be cut. These programs are not luxuries. They are lifelines.

When someone is in crisis, whether they are a survivor of violence, a veteran in need, or a family facing trauma, access to services can mean the difference between safety and danger. Passing HB 2428 is the difference between hope and despair.

Supporting HB 2418 is about standing up for those who cannot stand alone in moment of despair. It is about honoring the values we say we believe in, service, protection, and community.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JESSICA HILL</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-634-4161</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MISSOURI COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC &amp; SEXUAL VIOLENCE</b>		TITLE: <b>CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>217 OSCAR DRIVE, SUITE A</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL: <b>jessica.hill@mocadsv.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/2/2026 2:08 PM</b>	

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My name is Jessica Hill, and I am the Chief Public Affairs Officer for the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence. On behalf of MOCADSV and its almost one hundred member agencies who provide services to the state’s victims of domestic and sexual violence, we thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2418, sponsored by Representative Loy.

The federal Victims of Crime Act or VOCA, signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1984, established the Crime Victims Fund as a non-taxpayer-supported resource financed through federal fines, penalties, and forfeitures. In recent years, declines in prosecutions and uncollected penalties have led to critically low balances, reducing federal support to states. In Missouri, the General Assembly has supported the work of victim advocates serving crime victims that include child victims of physical and sexual abuse, families affected by drunk drivers, and survivors of stalking and rape, to name a few. However, the 2027 proposed budget eliminates that support, creating a projected \$15 million shortfall and potentially cutting available funding by 50 percent.

Without action, the consequences for Missouri crime victims will be severe. Providers have already endured funding reductions this year, and additional cuts of up to 50 percent could leave an estimated 140,000 victims without services. Because as much as 80 percent of VOCA funding supports essential personnel, these reductions would destabilize the very workforce that guides survivors through crisis intervention, emergency shelter, child advocacy centers, court appointed special advocates, prosecutor-based advocates, counseling, legal advocacy, case management, and many more supportive services. Rural communities would be particularly hard hit, and the broader criminal justice system would suffer as advocates play a critical role in helping victims navigate the path toward long-term safety, healing, and participation in the justice system.

Missouri’s crime victims need these vital services, and the obligation is not solely on the federal government to financially support these services. Creating the Missouri Crime Victims Fund, using the current framework of the VOCA program, within the Department of Social Services, offers a sustainable solution for supporting the existing work of victim service providers. Most importantly, it guarantees that support for victims remains stable and dependable—sending a clear message that Missouri stands with survivors and is committed to preserving their dignity, safety, and access to justice.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JESSICA SEITZ</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-415-6228</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>MISSOURI NETWORK AGAINST CHILD ABUSE</b>		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: <b>520 DIX RD, SUITE C</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65109</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JESSICA WOOLBRIGHT</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-533-1313</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>SAINT MARTHA'S</b>		TITLE: <b>EXEC. DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>PO BOX 4950</b>			
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63108</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JOANNE SCHRADER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/21/2026 10:43 PM</b>	
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Frequently, crime victims experience medical bills, ongoing trauma, property damage or loss, and lost wages from having to attend court. In some cases, they are not able to fully collect from insurance or the perpetrator. They deserve compensation for their injuries and losses. For this reason, I support crime victim compensation funds.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>JOSHUA N. KING</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>816-285-1381</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MOCSA</b>		TITLE: <b>VICE PRESIDENT OF GRANTS AND COMPLIANCE</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>3100 BROADWAY, SUITE 400</b>			
CITY: <b>KANSAS CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>64111</b>
EMAIL: <b>jking@mocsa.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/2/2026 4:12 PM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

Dear Chairwoman Jones,

I represent the Metropolitan Organization Countering Sexual Assault (MOCSA). MOCSA strongly supports the passage of HB 2418, creating the Missouri Crime Victims Fund. This will help ensure victims of sexual assault and child sexual abuse receive the vital healing, care, and information they need.

MOCSA serves as the regional rape crisis center for the greater Kansas City region. We serve thousands of Missourians each year, and about 1 of every 4 rapes reported in the State of Missouri takes place in our service area.

With the well-known 30-50% decline in federal dollars from the Victims Of Crime Act (VOCA) program, HB 2418 shows Missouri stands up for--and stands with--Missouri victims. This bill supports survivors of sex crimes by fostering continuity of service they can rely on.

Specifically, HB 2418 will help reduce the shortage and uncertainty in DSS budgeting for statewide victim-service programs. It will also empower the legislature to allocate precious dollars with dedicated precision: prioritizing survivors of sexual trauma, child abuse, domestic violence, and other crimes--providing greater sustainability of care for victims in their darkest hours.

MOCSA strongly supports HB 2418. Thank you for your time, and for your shared vision to support victims of sexual abuse and assault across our state.

Thank you,

Joshua N. King

Vice President of Grants and Compliance  
(MOCSA) Metropolitan Organization Countering Sexual Assault

Vice Chair, Public Policy Committee  
(MOCADSV) Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>KAREN J AROESTY</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-307-6633</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>SAFE CONNECTIONS</b>		TITLE: <b>CEO</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>16 NARRAGANSETT DRIVE</b>			
CITY: <b>LADUE</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63124</b>
EMAIL: <b>karen@safeconnections.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/2/2026 8:24 AM</b>	

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I write as CEO of Safe Connections, highlighting 50 years of service in the St. Louis region to victims and survivors of domestic violence, sex abuse and human trafficking with crisis response, individual and group therapy and prevention education. VOCA funding cuts, now 23.5% less than last year, have already impacted our ability to provide necessary services. We anticipate additional cuts in the next contract proposals. The national statistics are pretty consistent-- 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men will experience intimate partner and family violence, harassment, stalking, economic and other forms of manipulation and coercion in their lifetimes. The impact of domestic violence happens well beyond the individual and the family. It hits at healthcare services, workplaces, law enforcement support, the education of children. It creates long term physical and mental health challenges. Professional staff and direct services are not only valuable and important, they are necessary for healing, safety and community wellbeing. Thank you for your vote in support of HB 2814.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>KATHLEEN CROKER</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-364-0579</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>RUSSELL HOUSE, RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE</b>		TITLE: <b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>PO BOX 2259</b>			
CITY: <b>ROLLA</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65402</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>KELLY</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>660-269-8999</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>SAFE PASSAGE</b>		TITLE: <b>CO-DIRECTOR- VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>1823 ROBERTSON RD</b>			
CITY: <b>MOBERLY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65270</b>
EMAIL: <b>spassage@sbcglobal.net</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/27/2026 3:41 PM</b>	
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Dear Members of the House Children and Families Committee,

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 2418, sponsored by Representative Cathy Jo Loy, which will be heard on Tuesday, March 3 at 8:00 AM in House Hearing Room 6.

House Bill 2418 would establish the Missouri Crime Victims Fund and create a permanent line item within the Department of Social Services budget for general revenue to be appropriated for VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) services. This legislation is a critical step toward stabilizing victim services at a time when continued funding reductions are placing lifesaving programs at risk—particularly in rural communities.

Domestic violence shelters are more than emergency housing providers. We are often the final barrier between families and homelessness. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has identified fleeing domestic violence as one of the leading causes of homelessness nationwide. When survivors leave abusive homes, they frequently have no financial resources, no safe support system, and no immediate housing options. Shelters provide the safety and stability that prevent families from entering the homeless system.

When shelters close or reduce capacity, the impact is immediate and severe. The families who would have been safely housed are instead forced into cars, unstable living arrangements, or onto the streets. Rebuilding a life without a stable address, reliable access to basic hygiene, or a safe place for children to sleep and attend school is exponentially more difficult. Homelessness increases, and so do long-term public costs.

Domestic violence is also deeply connected to mental health challenges and substance use, often as a direct result of trauma. Shelters do far more than provide a bed. We connect survivors to therapy, medical care, mental health services, and substance use treatment. We help parents and children access counseling, educational stability, legal advocacy, and long-term housing resources. Stable VOCA funding allows us to interrupt cycles of violence, trauma, and homelessness before they become generational.

For Safe Passage specifically, an additional VOCA reduction would be devastating. We operate 24/7 with a small staff serving multiple rural counties with limited local fundraising capacity. Previous cuts

have already required significant adjustments. Another reduction would mean staff layoffs, reduced advocacy hours, and potential limits on shelter capacity. That translates directly into fewer answered crisis calls, fewer survivors safely housed, and fewer children receiving trauma-informed support. For some victims, that could mean returning to an abusive situation simply because there is nowhere else to go. Our shelter is one of a very few that cover the entire North East section of the state. We are operating on a very slippery slope and trying our best to hold on. We don't want to follow in the footsteps of other shelters that have closed their shelter services and/or closed down completely. But - that possibility is something that we have to face if something like this doesn't happen.

Investing in victim services is also an investment in homelessness prevention, mental health stabilization, child safety, and safer communities overall. Supporting House Bill 2418 is a proactive and fiscally responsible step that will protect Missouri families and reduce long-term system costs.

I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 2418 and help secure sustainable funding for crime victim services across Missouri.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to Missouri's children and families.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 2418</b>		DATE: <b>3/3/2026</b>
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>		
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>LEANNE REESE</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-256-1445</b>
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MISSOURI COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION</b>		TITLE: <b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>
ADDRESS: <b>1000 W. NIFONG BLVD., BLDG. 4, SUITE 201D</b>		
CITY: <b>COLUMBIA</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>
		ZIP: <b>65203</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 12:00 AM</b>
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 2418</b>		DATE: <b>3/3/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>LISA FLEMING</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>816-605-7109</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>ROSE BROOKS CENTER</b>		TITLE: <b>CEO</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>PO BOX 8619</b>			
CITY: <b>KANSAS CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>64114</b>
EMAIL: <b>lisa@rosebrooks.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/2/2026 5:58 PM</b>	

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

Rose Brooks Center, a nonprofit serving survivors of domestic violence and their children, and pets, in Jackson County, Missouri extends its full support for House Bill 2418- Crime Victim Assistance. This enabling legislation would create the Missouri Crime Victims Fund, a stable funding source for Missouri's support of federal VOCA program victim services.

Domestic violence victim services are critical to saving lives of adults and children and keeping our communities safe. In 2025, law enforcement agencies in Jackson County connected 4,951 victims at risk of being killed by their abusive partner to hotline, shelter, and community-based advocacy services provided by Rose Brooks Center, Hope House, and Synergy Services. The domestic violence crime victims had all experienced one or more lethality risk indicators- their partner threatened to kill them and their children, threatened with or used a weapon against the victim, strangled, or stalked the victim, or the victim believed their abusive partner would kill them and their children. General Revenue funds approved by the Governor and legislature in the past 4 years ensured that these lifesaving services were available to victims at risk of being killed. The Missouri Crime Victim Fund will be a first step to ensuring lifesaving shelter and services in the future.

The projected 50% reduction in Missouri VOCA dollars will result in catastrophic reductions of crime victim services across Missouri for victims of child abuse, domestic violence, and sexual violence. Based on current funding and service delivery calculated by the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence, a 50% cut will result in:

- 140,000 Missouri crime victims not being served in SFY 2027
- 13,000 crime victims not receiving emergency housing services
- Jeopardize crisis intervention for victims at highest risk of being killed who are assessed and referred by law enforcement through lethality assessment program
- Severely limit or eliminate 24/7 victim services- hotlines and hospital emergency rooms
- Severely limit or eliminate advocates who help victims navigate criminal investigations and processes for protection orders and criminal cases
- Forensic interviewing of children who disclose severe physical or sexual abuse will be reduced or eliminated
- Severe reduction or elimination of resources survivors and their children use to escape violent, often high lethality relationships- Emergency shelter, hotel placement, assistance filing for protection orders, emergency financial assistance for housing, & our response to high lethality referrals from the police and hospitals

The cuts to victim services would also cost the state more in the long run with reductions of victim service agency workforce, growing medical costs for domestic violence injuries, additional need for law enforcement intervention, and larger pressure on hospital emergency rooms, court system, child

welfare system, and foster care.

The VOCA reduction is the collision of shrinking federal dollars and significant state-level cuts at the same time. A \$26 million reduction will eliminate lifesaving services and the destabilization of an effective anti-crime network of domestic violence advocates, prosecutors, and law enforcement working together to hold criminal offenders accountable and keep victims safe.

Rose Brooks Center urges our Missouri Legislature to approve HB 2418, the enabling legislation for the establishment of the Missouri Crime Victim Fund to ensure victims of domestic violence and their children have lifesaving services and a strong justice system for keeping families and communities safe.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>		
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>		
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>		
WITNESS NAME: <b>PRECIOUS JONES</b>		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE:      ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 5:43 AM</b>
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I am in full support of this bill. As a victim who lost a son to homicide during that time this fund could come handy for a lot of families and should be made available to families. It's a generous way that Missouri take care of its Missourians in the unimaginable times. Once carjacked I had to cancel all my cards and no I.D. I felt I was starting over from strach. Once again this bill could have helped and will help others in unforeseen situations.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 2418</b>		DATE: <b>3/3/2026</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>SARA BRAMMER</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>816-505-4905</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>SYNERGY SERVICES</b>		TITLE: <b>VICE PRESIDENT OF FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>400 E 6TH ST</b>			
CITY: <b>PARKVILLE</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>64152</b>
EMAIL: <b>sbrammer@synergyservices.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/2/2026 2:45 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

**Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 2418**  
 Submitted by: Sara Brammer, Ph.D.  
 Organization: Synergy Services  
 Location: Parkville MO

Chair Jones and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2418, legislation that would establish the Missouri Crime Victims Fund and create a permanent line item within the Department of Social Services budget to allow general revenue appropriations to support VOCA-funded victim services.

My name is Sara Brammer, and I serve as Vice President of Domestic Violence Services with Synergy Services, a nonprofit agency serving survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, and child abuse in the Kansas City region. Each year, we provide shelter, housing, advocacy, therapeutic services, and offender intervention programming to thousands of Missouri families seeking safety and stability.

**The Urgent Need for Sustainable Victim Services Funding**

For decades, the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) has been the backbone of funding for victim service programs across Missouri. These funds support: emergency shelter and crisis response, safety planning and victim advocacy, counseling and trauma-informed therapy, legal advocacy and court accompaniment, and services for children exposed to violence.

VOCA funding has declined dramatically nationwide due to reduced federal deposits into the Crime Victims Fund. Missouri programs are already experiencing significant reductions, forcing agencies to consider staff layoffs, reduced services, waiting lists, and program closures. Without intervention, these reductions will leave survivors without lifesaving services and destabilize the systems designed to protect them.

**Why House Bill 2418 Matters**

House Bill 2418 creates a sustainable state mechanism to stabilize victim services by establishing the Missouri Crime Victims Fund, creating a permanent budget line item for general revenue

appropriations, ensuring continuity of critical victim services during federal funding fluctuations, and strengthening Missouri's commitment to public safety and survivor support.

This legislation provides Missouri with the flexibility to maintain essential services regardless of federal funding volatility.

#### **Public Safety Impact: Kansas City Violence & Lethality Risk**

Victim services are not only compassionate responses — they are essential components of public safety.

The Kansas City region continues to experience significant violent crime challenges. In recent years, Kansas City has recorded more than 180 homicides annually, with a substantial portion linked to domestic and family violence, interpersonal conflicts, or known relationships between victims and offenders.

Domestic violence is one of the most dangerous contexts for lethal violence. National research shows that over half of female homicide victims are killed by intimate partners; the risk of homicide increases dramatically when a survivor attempts to leave an abusive relationship; and strangulation, stalking, threats with weapons, and escalating coercive control are key predictors of lethality.

Locally, law enforcement and victim service providers regularly identify these high-risk indicators in cases that later escalate to severe injury or homicide.

When victim services are available, survivors can access safety planning and lethality assessments, high-risk cases can be identified earlier, coordinated community responses can intervene before violence escalates, and survivors are more likely to seek protection and participate in prosecution.

When services are reduced, victims are forced to remain in dangerous situations, increasing lethality risk.

#### **Impact on Survivors, Children, and Community Stability**

When victim services are accessible, survivors are more likely to report violence and seek protection, repeat violence and homicide risk are reduced, children exposed to violence receive trauma-informed support, law enforcement and courts operate more effectively, and communities experience greater long-term stability.

In contrast, service reductions create barriers to safety at the precise moment survivors face the greatest danger.

#### **Fiscal Responsibility and System Efficiency**

Investing in victim services reduces long-term public costs associated with emergency medical care, repeated law enforcement response, court system utilization, foster care and child welfare involvement, and homelessness and housing instability.

Sustained funding ensures system stability and prevents costly crisis responses.

#### **Missouri's Commitment to Victims**

House Bill 2418 affirms Missouri's commitment to ensuring that victims of crime are not left without support due to funding fluctuations beyond their control.

By creating a permanent funding mechanism, Missouri strengthens its justice system, enhances public safety, and protects the most vulnerable members of our communities.

#### **Conclusion**

Victim service programs save lives. They prevent future violence. They support children, strengthen families, and improve community safety.

House Bill 2418 provides Missouri with a responsible, forward-looking solution to stabilize critical services and ensure survivors continue to receive the support they need.

I respectfully urge the committee to support House Bill 2418.

**Thank you for your time and your commitment to the safety and well-being of Missouri families.**

**Respectfully submitted,  
Sara Brammer, Ph.D.  
Vice President of Family Violence Services  
Synergy Services**



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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COMMITTEE: <b>Children and Families</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>TIM GARRISON</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>417-988-3460</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>MO OFFICE OF PROSECUTION SERVICES, MO ASSN. OF PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS</b>		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: <b>200 MADISON, STE 1040</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFF CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65102</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/3/2026 12:00 AM</b>	
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>TRESSA PRICE</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>2/27/2026 2:42 PM</b>	
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

**My name is Tressa Price. I experienced Domestic Violence for 12 years and have been stalked by my ex-husband for 30 years. Without the support of a Domestic Violence Shelter, I wouldn't have learned how to protect myself, what options I have, or how to apply for an order of protection.**

**Funding for Victims of Crime is necessary to provide victims with emergency shelter, security, safety planning, victim and legal advocacy, and resources to help them navigate the process of dealing with prosecutors and law enforcement while trying to stay safe. Abusers automatically get an attorney to represent them, but the victims are left to figure everything out on their own. Without Victim Services Providers, the victims are left traumatized with no support, and to figure it out the best way they can. Local victim shelters and services save the lives of adults and children across the State of Missouri every day. I support HB 2418 to continue supporting victims of crime in Missouri for years to come. Without this funding, many shelters and service providers will be forced to close, resulting in increased and continued abuse for adults and children. And domestic violence homicide will increase when victims and their children have nowhere to turn.**



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>SARAH BERRY</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/2/2026 11:47 AM</b>	

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

HB 2418 creates the “Missouri Crime Victims Fund,” a dedicated, non-reverting fund in the state treasury to distribute moneys to entities eligible under the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Pub. L. 98-473, for the same purposes authorized under federal law.

While supporting crime victims is unquestionably a legitimate public purpose, HB 2418 raises structural and fiscal governance concerns that warrant careful scrutiny.

First, the bill creates a non-reverting dedicated fund insulated from general revenue reversion under §33.080, RSMo. Non-reverting funds, while sometimes appropriate, reduce annual legislative flexibility and long-term budget transparency. When funds are shielded from reversion without sunset or periodic legislative review, fiscal oversight is diminished.

Second, the bill ties state disbursement authority directly to federal statutory and regulatory standards (“for the same purposes” as VOCA grants). Incorporating federal standards by reference—particularly evolving federal regulations—may create dynamic incorporation concerns. If federal rules change, state disbursement authority effectively changes without additional action by the Missouri General Assembly.

Third, the bill does not specify:

- An administering agency,
- Oversight or audit procedures,
- Reporting requirements to the General Assembly,
- Allocation formulas among eligible entities,
- Conflict-of-interest safeguards for private grant recipients.

Absent these guardrails, discretionary disbursement authority may expose the program to equal protection, administrative law, or transparency challenges if similarly situated entities are treated differently or if funding decisions lack articulated criteria.

**Legislative Notice:** The General Assembly is placed on notice that HB 2418’s creation of a non-reverting dedicated fund tied to evolving federal statutory and regulatory standards, without express state-level oversight, reporting, and allocation criteria, creates foreseeable fiscal transparency, dynamic incorporation, and equal protection challenges if disbursement decisions lack objective

**statutory standards or legislative review safeguards.**