



12 December 2008

To: Obama-Biden Department of Justice Transition Team  
From: The National Organization for Victim Assistance



On behalf of the Board of Directors of the National Organization for Victim Assistance, we want to express our appreciation to you for this opportunity to communicate our perspective on the important issue of crime victims' rights and services. As much as ever and especially with the insecure economic times, crime victims' assistance is crucial to the needs of individuals as well as the social order of our nation.

But more than that, victims' services and compensation are crucial to circumventing long-term fiscal demands upon the government that occur when there is no or limited intervention. A downward spiral can begin that is hard to stop. We get regular requests for help from hard-working Americans whose victimization has meant huge and growing medical bills, job loss and even eviction from their homes.

We could recommend many legitimate and specialized items that would serve victims. But for the sake of focus and recognition of their immense impact for all victims of crime, we would recommend the prioritization of three crucial objectives.

- **Secure and protect the Victims of Crime Act Fund.** Reestablish the original intent of that resource for victims' services and compensation that uses no taxpayer funds. A funding cap is appropriate and necessary but as the fund is healthy, set the limit at \$600 million and remove various non-victim withdrawals, like administrative fees, that have diminished available funds for victims of crime.
- **Affirm and establish victim-knowledgeable leadership in key appointed positions in the Department of Justice.** Informed decisions are crucial to crime victims' rights, particularly in the Office for Justice Programs (OJP) and the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC).
- **Make OJP and OVC separate and equal offices.** Victims can better be served by an empowered Office for Victims of Crime with victims' service as the mission objective.

We are truly grateful for the energies, efforts and investments you are willing to make on behalf of victims of crime.

Kind regards,

Robert Denton  
President

Will Marling  
Executive Director