

EXHIBIT 1
DATE 3/26/2013
HB 613



Montana Coalition
Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

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To: House Judiciary Committee
From: Kelsen Young, Executive Director
Re: HB 613 – Appropriate Funds for Victim Service Providers
Date: March 26th, 2013

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, as you know, MCADSV represents the over 60 victim service providers in Montana who provide services in each of your communities. We rise in support of HB 613.

This is the first request for state general fund money to support victim service programs across Montana. Currently, Montana does not provide state general fund money for direct services in Montana. Montana victim service programs rely almost entirely on federal funding to operate. Any additional funds come from private contributions, foundations, court fees, etc. Montana is one of only a few states who do not provide state general fund dollars, or other sorts of state monies, for victim services – most states do provide funding.

There are roughly 60 victim service programs in Montana who would be eligible to apply for these funds from the Montana Board of Crime Control (MBCC). These programs provide vital, life-saving advocacy services in every community in Montana. These programs are at risk of closing if we don't address the need for state funding.

MBCC already provides funding to victim service programs and distributes the following federal grants: Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Violence Against Women Act – STOP Funding (VAWA), and Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP). \$300,000 per year is a modest request and reflects less than 10% of what is provided through federal funds.

Currently the state receives approximately \$800,000 each year under the VAWA federal grant but only 30-40% of those funds are provided to victim service programs (the rest goes to law enforcement, prosecution, and courts). The state receives approximately \$220,000 in SASP funds each year which funds 10-12 victim service programs in Montana. The state receives approximately \$1,768,000 in VOCA funds which are distributed to crime victim advocate programs in Montana. VOCA is the most significant source of funding for victim service programs.

We believe you, like us, want to end domestic and sexual violence, as well as other forms of victimization, from occurring in our homes and communities. We have witnessed your efforts in addressing these important issues through various legal statute changes. Now is the time for you to demonstrate your support of these victim service programs in your communities. Please vote YES on HB 613. Victims in Montana are counting on you!

