Dear Representative {Name Here},

My name is (insert name). I am (title, program) from (city). I am writing as a community supporter of victims of domestic and sexual violence in in our local area. I care deeply about the safety and well-being of my community and need your help to keep it a safe place for everyone.

I am writing to express my profound concern that VAWA is no longer being funded out of the general fund but instead through VOCA, which will ultimately result in a dramatic decrease in both VOCA and VAWA funding on the federal level. Our community programs depend on VOCA dollars to provide critical services to those affected by domestic and sexual violence. This decision will have a devastating impact on victims and our community. Possible impact areas include:

* Decreased safety of women and youth in our community
* Less funding to support sexual assault victim services, which includes sexual exploitation victims
* Less funding to get victims to a safe location and to assist them with a fresh start in a local apartment
* More support requests at the local food shelf and other organizations supporting victims
* Donor fatigue due to increased demands for funding and support at the community level

I am a supporter of the Willmar Area Women’s Fund (WAWF), an initiative of the Willmar Area Community Foundation (WACF). The WAWF supports and enhances the lives of women and girls facing challenges in Kandiyohi County and funds and fuels the work of our partner organizations, Safe Avenues – the local advocacy service provider for domestic and sexual violence victims, Lutheran Social Services, and Kandiyohi County Human Trafficking Task Force. These organizations work to prevent sexual exploitation in our community and assist victims, both critical to the continued safety and well-being of our community. If funding is reduced it would negatively impact our partners, which would, in turn, require further fundraising from our organization. Our fear is this will over-burden our local supporters, creating a ripple effect throughout the community and causing a decrease in funding to other programs that also help victims.

VAWA must be funded out of the general fund as it has been for decades so the VOCA dollars that allow our community programs to provide critical services to victims and their children remain intact. In (city), we value and deserve a safe community. We hope you will be a voice for victims. I urge you, (Representative’s name), to do whatever is in your power to ensure that VAWA is funded through the general fund to sustain VOCA funding and give domestic violence programs the resources they desperately need.

Please contact Safe Avenues at (320) 235-0475 to schedule a tour of our local domestic violence shelter for an in-depth look at how this decision will impact our community. For questions about the WAWF or our work, please contact Sara Carlson, Executive Director of the Willmar Area Community Foundation, at (320)-235-4380.

Sincerely,

Your name

Address

Phone number