

October 16, 2007

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Commerce,  
Justice and Science  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
144 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce,  
Justice and Science  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
123 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Mikulski and Ranking Member Shelby:

On behalf of Legal Momentum, the chair of the National Task Force to End Domestic and Sexual Violence and the nation's oldest advocacy organization that works to defend the rights of women and girls, I urge you to oppose Senator Vitter's amendment, number 3277. Legal Momentum strongly believes that by withholding funds made available through the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) from communities that pledge not to ask about immigration status when persons seek to report crimes, this amendment would stop immigrant victims of domestic and sexual violence from being able to call the police for help.

Battered immigrants would be seriously hurt by such a policy. Victims of domestic violence need to trust the police to seek assistance, but fear of being reported to immigration officials is one of the most significant factors preventing immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking from seeking help. Any legislation that ends trust and causes battered immigrants to fear the police exposes these victims to even greater peril.

I also urge you to support Senator Shelby's amendment, number 3270, which would raise the Victims of Crime Act Fund (VOCA) cap by \$20 million. This would prevent cuts to VOCA and give states an increase in VOCA funding. As you know, VOCA provides essential direct services for victims of ALL types of crime, particularly victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Again, I urge you and your colleagues to reject Senator Vitter's amendment, number 3277, and support Senator Shelby's amendment, number 3270.

Sincerely,



Lisalyn R. Jacobs  
Vice President, Government Relations