

The Family Violence Prevention and Services Improvement Act of 2023

U.S. Senators Bob Casey and Lisa Murkowski

The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act supports life-saving domestic violence programs

The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) was the federal government's first response to the crisis of domestic violence. First signed into law in 1984, FVPSA supports life-saving services through grants to states, Tribes and territories, as well as to the National Domestic Violence Hotline. Administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, FVPSA is the only federal funding source dedicated to providing support to domestic violence shelters and programs. FVPSA provides base core funding to support more than 1,500 local public, private, nonprofit, and faith-based organizations and programs and over 240 Tribes and Tribal organizations in their response to the urgent needs of over 1.3 million domestic violence victims and their children.

Through FVPSA, survivors receive services such as emergency shelter, crisis counseling, safety planning, and assistance recovering from financial abuse and addressing housing insecurity. These programs also provide education and prevention programming to millions of community members annually. Additionally, FVPSA provides funds to domestic violence coalitions, a program dedicated to addressing the needs of children of domestic violence victims, and technical assistance and training programs.

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The Family Violence Prevention and Services Improvement Act of 2023 makes the following enhancements to FVPSA:

- **Increases the funding authorization level to \$270 million to expand victim services and provide access to FVPSA funds for programs not currently funded:**
 - Increases authorization levels to increase federal funding for direct services across the country. These funds help providers maintain core staff and keep the doors open.
 - Makes adjustments to the current formula to address Tribal sovereign relationships, restructures the funding for the children's program grants, and provides funding for Tribal coalitions and a newly authorized culturally specific grant program.
 - Updates the authorization levels for prevention programs, the National Domestic Violence Hotline, the StrongHearts Native Helpline, and the underserved grant programs.
- **Expands support for, and access, to culturally-specific programs:** Culturally-specific organizations are better equipped to address the complex, multi-layered challenges facing

victims from racial and ethnic minority populations as they seek services and protections from abuse. In addition, culturally- specific programs often have challenges accessing FVPSA funding at the state and local levels due to the limited funding available. This bill authorizes a new culturally-specific program to address these needs and incorporates related funding into the formula itself.

- **Strengthens the capacity of Indian Tribes to exercise their sovereign authority to more fully respond to domestic violence in their communities and authorizes funding for Tribal coalitions and the Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center:**
 - Increases funding for Tribes by allocating Tribal grants as a set-aside to acknowledge the sovereign authority of Tribes in the formula allocation.
 - Authorizes funding for Tribal coalitions, which provide vital support to Tribes and Tribal domestic violence programs but are not currently authorized by statute to receive FVPSA funding.
 - Codifies the currently funded Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center to reduce Tribal disparities and ensure ongoing access to comprehensive technical assistance from culturally- relevant providers that address the unique and urgent needs of Alaska Native domestic violence victims.

- **Meaningfully invests in prevention, bringing evidence-informed, community-based prevention initiatives to more communities across the country:**
 - Continues support for CDC’s DELTA Program, which provides competitive funds to design, test and evaluate innovative domestic violence and dating violence prevention models.
 - Authorizes new grants to state, territorial and Tribal coalitions to prevent domestic violence and collaborate with other agencies.

- **Strengthens and updates the National Domestic Violence Hotline and hotline services for underrepresented populations, including American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and victims with disabilities:**
 - Codifies the StrongHearts Native Helpline, which addresses the culturally-specific needs and specific jurisdictional issues facing native survivors and survivors living on Tribal lands. The Helpline opened its doors in 2017 through a collaboration between the National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center and the National Domestic Violence Hotline.
 - Updates the National Domestic Violence Hotline to include emerging technological needs, such as digital services.

- **Creates a new underserved populations grant program:** The lack of resources and severity of violence is often heightened for survivors living at the margins, such as those living in rural communities, individuals with disabilities, older adults, youth, and others. These underserved populations are often reluctant to seek assistance, and when they do, they frequently look for services and support in their immediate communities. This bill creates a grant program for family centers, youth centers, senior centers, community-based organizations or vocational organizations to prevent such violence in the future and to meet the needs of survivors.

- **Continues to support national technical assistance (TA) centers, including a new TA center serving people with disabilities**, and their work to develop effective policy, practice, research and cross-system collaborations.