

### **Testimony Follow-up February 13, 2023**

The following is a follow up to my testimony on February 10, 2023 to clarify/summarize the VCCVS requests in the FY 2024 budget.

#### **Surcharge**

13 V.S.A § 7282 provides that an additional surcharge be added to penalties for criminal offenses and some traffic violations. Since 2009, the surcharge was divided between the Victim’s Compensation Fund, the Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund, and the General Fund. The total amount of the surcharge that is allocated to these three funds is \$41 or \$47, depending on when the offense occurred. \$7.25 goes into the General Fund and the rest is divided between the Victims’ Compensation Special Fund and the Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund.

The Governor’s recommendation, which we support, is that the \$7.25 no longer go to the General Fund, but that it be divided between the Victim’s Compensation Fund and the Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund. This will require a statutory language amendment as follows:

#### **13 V.S.A § 7282. Surcharge**

(8) \*\*\*

(C) For any offense or violation committed after June 30, 2009, but before July 1, 2013, \$41.00, of which ~~\$23.75~~ \$27.50 shall be deposited in the Victims Compensation Special Fund created by section 5359 of this title, and of which ~~\$10.00~~ \$13.50 shall be deposited in the Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund created by section 5360 of this title.

(D) For any offense or violation committed after June 30, 2013, \$47.00, of which ~~\$29.75~~ \$33.50 shall be deposited in the Victims Compensation Special Fund created by section 5359 of this title, and of which ~~\$10.00~~ \$13.50 shall be deposited in the Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund created by section 5360 of this title.

This should produce approximately \$300,000 to \$400,000 in revenues for these two funds in subsequent years.

#### **Domestic Violence Trainer Position**

The Domestic and Sexual Violence Fund has been covering half of the cost of the Domestic Violence Trainer position within the Vermont Criminal Justice Council, which is \$61,525.



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We support the Governor's recommendation to now use General Funds to cover this position. This requires a statutory amendment as follows:

## **20 V.S.A. § 2365. Domestic and sexual violence training**

~~(a) In order to remain certified, law enforcement officers shall receive by 2011 at least eight hours of domestic violence training in a program approved by the Vermont Criminal Justice Council and the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.~~

~~(b) Law enforcement officers shall receive domestic violence retraining every two years in a program approved by the Vermont Criminal Justice Council.~~

~~(c) The Vermont Police Academy shall employ a domestic violence trainer for the sole purpose of training Vermont law enforcement and related practitioners on issues related to domestic violence. Funding for this position shall be transferred by the Center for Crime Victim Services from the Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund created by 13 V.S.A. § 5360~~

In order to remain certified, law enforcement officers shall receive domestic and sexual violence training every two years in a program approved by the Vermont Criminal Justice Council and the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. Training shall focus on law enforcement skills and competency related to domestic and sexual violence and shall be funded by the Vermont Criminal Justice Council.

## **Department of Public Safety Victim Advocates**

The Vermont Department of Public Safety currently employs two victim advocate positions that work with the Major Crimes Unit as first responders to serious crimes and all deaths in the state,

- The Victim Services Director position is funded by the VCCVS with federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) dollars in the amount of \$137,100 annually.
- The Victim Services Specialist position is funded through a \$400,000 three-year discretionary grant from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) that goes directly to the Department of Public Safety. This grant funding ends in FY23.

These advocates are funded entirely with federal funds. These positions have been extremely successful from all reports and provide support for both victims and law enforcement officers. The Governor is recommending that the Victim Services Specialist be funded with General Funds, which we support. However, as state positions, ***we are requesting that both of these positions be funded through the General Fund.***





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**Increase to Base Funding – 3%**

We are requesting an additional 3% increase to our base for FY24. We did not receive a 3% increase for FY23 as most, if not all, state agencies received.

**Projected Shortfall – Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund**

We anticipate a projected shortfall of \$300,00 in the Domestic and Sexual Violence Special Fund for FY24. We are looking at options to address this without asking for a one-time appropriation, but we wanted to alert you to this issue.

