**National Children’s Alliance 2016 Leadership Conference**

**Legislative Priorities**

**Thank you:**

We want to thank you for your continued and consistent support of Children’s Advocacy Centers (CACs) through action and legislation passed over the past year. Specifically, we want to thank you for:

* Fully funding the *Victims of Child Abuse Act* the past FOUR years (FY13, FY14 and FY15 at $19 million; FY16 at $20 million.)
* For increasing the available funding released from the Crime Victims Fund in CJS (FY15 - $2.36 billion; FY16 - $3.042 billion.)
* For passing the *Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act* that was signed into law in 2015. There is $2 million set-aside for CACs (the only set-aside), so your support of this legislation was and still is critical!

In the coming year, we look forward to continuing to work with you on:

**Victims of Child Abuse Act Funding**

Federal funding for the *Victims of Child Abuse Act* provides grants and seed money for the development of CACs, and for the training and technical assistance for child abuse professionals. *We urge full funding for the Victims of Child Abuse Act at the Senate proposed level of $21 million in the final FY17 CJS Appropriations bill.*

**Victims of Crime Act/Crime Victims Fund**

NCA/CACs are working closely with House and Senate champions to update and overhaul the *Victims of Crime Act* (VOCA*)* statute. *We want to thank you for releasing $2.36 billion from CVF in FY15 and $3.042 billion in FY16 and look forward to working with you to release as high a level as possible in FY17.*

In addition, we want thank Congress for the bipartisan senate letter asking DOJ to clarify that under ***current guidelines***, forensic interviews and forensic medical exams performed in CACs are eligible for VOCA reimbursement. As you know, both forensic interviews and forensic medical examinations are key components and essential for healing and justice of the victim and non-offending caregiver. This DOJ clarification is critical and has already made a difference!

We want to continue working with Congress as you urge DOJ to “expeditiously finalize” its 2013 proposed VOCA rule update (as required in the Senate FY17 CJS Appropriations Committee Report.) This proposed 2013 rule further restates that forensic interviews and forensic medical exams in CACs are covered, clarifies that VOCA funding can be used to serve trafficking victims, and also allows VOCA funding to pay for MDT case review, among other things.

**Trafficking**

Last year, JVTA was signed into law. This comprehensive legislation not only provides tools for law enforcement, but it also goes after demand and provide desperately needed funding for organization providing services for trafficking victims. Not only that, but JVTA designates $2 million specifically for CACs. We urge you to work with Sens. Cornyn and Klobuchar, as well as Reps. Poe, Wagner, Maloney and Beatty, to ensure JVTA is actually implemented.

**Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse Neglect Fatalities/Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA)**

Earlier this year, the Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse Neglect Fatalities released a final report on recommendations to reduce or eliminate child abuse deaths. The Commission’s report covers a lot of ground, but there are recommendations that Congress can and should consider including it the upcoming CAPTA Reauthorization bill. We are including a list of those recommendations in the folders and look forward to working with you to enact policies that better protect children.

As CACs and advocates for all victims of child abuse, we look forward to working with you on this critical issue.