

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 16, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy,

We write today to urge you to provide additional funding to support shelter and transitional housing services for survivors of domestic violence as you work to develop a CARES 2.0 package. Specifically, we request that you include an additional \$4 million for the Department of Justice Emergency and Transitional Pet Shelter and Housing Assistance grant program authorized by Section 12502 of PL 115-334.

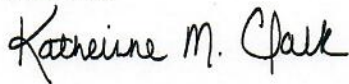
While we appreciate that the recently passed Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act included an additional \$45 million for the Family Violence Prevention and Services (FVPSA) program, we are concerned that more targeted funding will be required to meet the needs of victims and survivors with pets during the COVID-19 crisis. Reports of domestic violence have risen dramatically across the country in recent weeks as stay-at-home orders subject many victims of family abuse to prolonged periods of isolation with their abuser. We also know that COVID-19 related job loss and additional child care burdens from abrupt school and day care closures have increased the likelihood of domestic violence incidents.

Research has shown that the challenge of leaving an abusive relationship is compounded by the presence of a family pet. Approximately 50 percent of domestic violence survivors cite the fear of leaving their pets behind with their abuser as a reason for why they remain in abusive situations. Yet despite the prevalence of this problem, most shelters in the United States do not admit companion animals, and this lack of capacity often forces victims to remain in abusive situations out of fear of leaving their companion animals behind.

Recognizing the importance of addressing this problem, Congress incorporated the Pets and Women Safety (PAWS) Act into the 2018 Farm Bill, creating a grant program to help domestic violence shelters accommodate survivors with pets. While the Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime is currently working to get FY20 funding into the hands of shelters, we remain concerned that the \$2 million provided in FY20 will be insufficient to meet the growing need for these services. That is why we urge you to include no less than \$4 million in additional investment for these Emergency and Transitional Pet Shelter and Housing Assistance grants as we look to the next phase in our efforts to support vulnerable populations during this crisis.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you to provide for the immediate, increased needs of domestic violence survivors in CARES 2.0.

Sincerely,



Katherine Clark  
Member of Congress



Katie Porter  
Member of Congress

Colin Z. Allred  
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  
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Jim Costa  
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Jason Crow  
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Madeleine Dean  
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Ted Deutch  
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Anna G. Eshoo  
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Lizzie Fletcher  
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Brian Fitzpatrick  
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Vern Buchanan  
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Earl Blumenauer  
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Anthony Brown  
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Salud Carbajal  
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André Carson  
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Gerald E. Connolly  
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Charlie Crist  
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Susan A. Davis  
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Peter DeFazio  
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Veronica Escobar  
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Adriano Espaillat  
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Bill Foster  
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Tulsi Gabbard  
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John Larson  
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Lucy McBath  
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Jared Huffman  
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Rodney Davis  
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Anthony Brindisi  
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