April 29, 2022

Dear Appropriations Committee Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger:

I am requesting $3,000,000 in funding for the Jenesse Legal Assistance for Victims Center in fiscal year 2023. The entity to receive funding for this project is Jenesse Center, Inc. located at 3671 Stocker Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90008.

This grant to Jenesse Center, Inc. will allow the organization to create its proposed Legal Assistance for Victims Center. Jenesse would purchase and renovate a facility in South Los Angeles to provide legal supportive services to victims of domestic violence (DV) in an area currently with few or no legal services providers, much less those with specific expertise in areas of concern to DV victims, who often face legal barriers to escaping abuse and need the help of a professional to break the cycle of violence. Jenesse’s clients are primarily low-income women of color from the communities of South Los Angeles who have no ability to afford private legal counsel. For years Jenesse has held regular, periodic clinics to assist victims with resolving legal issues that keep them tied to their abuser. The demand for services, however, far outstrips Jenesse’s ability to meet it, even with pro bono attorneys supplementing the work of staff.

This would be an excellent use of taxpayer funds primarily because effective intervention in DV reduces human suffering both for victims and their families. It can also reduce the societal costs related to homelessness, trauma and mental illness, foster care, medical expenses, and criminal investigations that can result from DV. For more than 23 years, Jenesse has worked to find and offer legal services for this population. Few DV intervention programs offer a free in-house legal department and Jenesse is the ONLY such agency in South Los Angeles. Since 1999, Jenesse’s legal staff has provided access to services for victims who need immediate, confidential information and resources regarding their rights and options. It has also formed partnerships with private attorneys and law firms to offer pro bono services. Available services include DV Protection Orders, U and T Visas and VAWA self-petitions, Landlord/Tenant Advocacy, Court Accompaniment, Legal Education including Legal Rights and Safe Environment Training, Civil Law, Family Law, Sexual Assault/Stalking Matters, and a myriad of other legal issues. Jenesse also conducts client and community training sessions to help educate and empower victims while demystifying the court process. Increasing access to our system of justice is also an outstanding use of taxpayer dollars.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Sincerely,

Karen Bass
Member of Congress