Honorable [INSERT NAME]

[INSERT ADDRESS]

Washington, D.C. 20510

Sent via Email

Dear [INSERT]:

On behalf of the [INSERT Tribe’s NAME], I am writing to respectfully request your assistance addressing a long-standing inequity that leaves tribal crime victims without access to the assistance and compensation they need and deserve. Specifically, I hope you will support efforts to ensure tribal governments, like state and territorial governments, have access to the Crime Victims Fund in order to provide crime victim assistance and compensation and improve investigations and prosecutions. This request is consistent with the National Congress of American Indian’s Resolution ANC 014-048 [and our Tribal Resolution No. \_\_\_\_ (if your Tribe has passed one)].

Despite having the highest crime victimization rates in the country, tribal governments are largely shut out of the programs and services funded through the Crime Victims Fund. Permanent, direct tribal funding for crime victims is imperative if tribal victims are to receive quality, trauma-informed care. The funding that is currently available to tribes is highly competitive, relatively meager as compared to the need, time-limited, and often carries with it restrictions that hobble innovation, stability and excellence in tribal victim services. Tribal governments should receive an annual allocation from the Crime Victims Fund in the same way as state and territorial governments.

We were encouraged when the bi-partisan SURVIVE Act, S. 1704, was introduced last year and passed unanimously out of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. The SURVIVE Act would have remedied the current situation by providing for a tribal funding stream similar to what states and other local governments receive from the Crime Victims Fund. [FOR SENATORS INCLUDE: We hope you will join the SURVIVE Act as a co-sponsor.] While we continue to push for legislation like the SURVIVE Act that would include Indian tribes in the programs funded by the Crime Victims Fund on a long term basis, we are also urging Congress to include language in the Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriations bill to ensure that tribal governments have direct access to the Crime Victims Fund this year so that they can meet the needs of crime victims on tribal lands.

Again, sustainable funding is critical to tribal communities for crime victims and criminal justice systems to truly effectuate change, and we hope we can count on your support. Thank you for listening to our concerns. Should you or your staff need any further information, please contact [INSERT CONTACT].

Sincerely,