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**Testimony of Rachel Feinstein | Director of DC Government and  
Community Relations | Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of  
Greater Washington  
Before the DC Council – Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety  
Regarding Oversight of the Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants  
*January 24, 2024***

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Good morning, Chairperson Pinto, Councilmembers, and staff. Thank you for your leadership and work on this issue and for the opportunity to provide comments on the Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants. My name is Rachel Feinstein and I'm a Ward 6 resident and Director of DC Government and Community Relations with the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington, known as the JCRC.

The JCRC is the public affairs arm of the organized Jewish community, representing over 100 synagogues, community centers, schools, and social service agencies throughout DC, Maryland, and Virginia, including nearly 20 in the District alone. I am here today on behalf of the DC Jewish community and one of our community partner organizations, the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (JCADA).

JCADA, who is also a coalition member of the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence, is a Jewish victim services agency that works closely with both local domestic violence agencies and the local organized Jewish community. Our resources are dedicated to 1) empowering all survivors of intimate partner violence in the Greater Washington, DC area to live safely, 2) educating the local Jewish community about intimate partner violence (IPV), and 3) articulating the unique needs of Jewish survivors to the secular community.

They serve the Jewish community and anyone in need regardless of faith, gender, or other identities, free of charge. In DC, JCADA provides both clinical long term trauma therapy, as well as victim advocacy services, to survivors of IPV. In FY23 they saw 177 clients, or 20% of our whole client base, with \$127,000 in funding from OVSJG.

We and JCADA are particularly concerned about a new clause added to FY24 grantees' contracts that allows the Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants (OVSJG) to revoke grants at any moment with just 30 days' notice without cause. Grantees, including JCADA, were required to agree to this new provision despite community objections in order to

receive grant funds. When grantees approached the office to discuss the provision, they were denied the opportunity to discuss further.

**We ask that the Council take swift action to remove this clause from grantees' contracts or be nullified so that service providers can focus on supporting victims and not on potentially losing funding at any moment.** This provision is of deep concern as it is impossible to run an organization with the knowledge that a primary source of funding could be pulled at any moment.

JCADA provides therapy services and consultation to help provide survivors with safety. For example, A client's abuser was released from prison and began harassing her digitally and then in-person at her home and work. JCADA helped the client find different housing and helped her to enroll in the Address Confidentiality Program, as well as set her up with a RING camera. The JCADA advocate also spoke with the client's manager, per the client's request, to ask that she be transferred to a different work location due to safety concerns.

Specific to the Jewish community, antisemitic incidents in the United States have been on the rise for several years and since the horrific attacks in Israel on October 7, 2023, the atmosphere in the cultural, political, and social service sectors has deteriorated dramatically for the Jewish people. A JCADA Advocate related the following story:

*Sarah (name changed to protect privacy), a client who recently left her abuser and has begun to establish a new life, has a son who currently lives in Israel. Due to enforced isolation from her abuser, she has few personal connections and constantly struggles with loneliness. Her stress has risen with worry for her son in Israel since the outbreak of the war. Sarah shared with her Victim Advocate, that she was considering returning to her abuser because he could provide support that she is unable to find elsewhere. JCADA's Victim Advocate was able to find safe community-based support for Sarah, empowering her to remain committed to her safety plan and continue to thrive in her new life.*

**This is the kind of work that would be disrupted if the 30-day revocation clause stands.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with this feedback. I'm happy to answer any questions today or following the hearing. The services JCADA provides in DC are vital. In the words of a DC JCADA client, "I am more grateful than you will ever know for the support. You have given me another level of safety and protection. I'll never forget your kindness." Thank you.