

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 17, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Capitol, Room 128  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Vice Chairman  
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Capitol, Room 146A  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Chair  
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, Food and Drug Administration,  
and Related Agencies  
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 129  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, Food and Drug Administration,  
and Related Agencies  
Hart Senate Office Building, Room 125  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairs Leahy and Baldwin, Vice Chairman Shelby, and Ranking Member Hoeven:

As you finalize the Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations legislation, we respectfully urge you to adopt the House position of \$3 million for the grant program authorized by Section 12502 of the 2018 Farm Bill (PL 115-334), the Protecting Animals with Shelter (PAWS) program. As you may recall, in FY21, Congress appropriated \$2.5 million for this program and we thank you for your past support of the previously enacted level. For FY22, \$3 million for PAWS funding was requested by a bipartisan group of [43 Senators and 204 Representatives seeking FY22 animal welfare provisions](#), in letters submitted to the Agriculture Appropriations subcommittees in the spring.

Section 12502 of the 2018 Farm Bill incorporated the language of the PAWS Act (S. 322 in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress) and authorized a new grant program to provide emergency and transitional shelter options for domestic violence survivors with companion animals. Abusers often threaten or inflict violence on pets as a way to intimidate or exert control over their partners and prevent them from leaving. Research has found that up to 84 percent of women entering domestic violence shelters reported that their partners abused or killed the family pet. This vital grant program helps the federal government ensure that more domestic violence shelters are able to accommodate victims with pets or arrange for third party pet shelter.

It is important to note that the program is set up as a pass-through, with funds going initially to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) but the grants being administered by the Department of Justice (DOJ). As a result, the President's FY22 budget request for USDA did not include funding for this program, due to what we understand was a miscommunication between the two agencies. DOJ has since clarified that they do want the program to continue and that additional funds are indeed necessary for that to happen. Additionally, demand for this program has consistently outstripped available funds. In FY20, Congress appropriated \$2 million for the

PAWS program; there were 40 applications for grants that year, and six grants were funded for a total of \$2.2 million. In FY21, Congress appropriated \$2.5 million for the PAWS program; there were 22 applications for grants that year, and five grants were funded for a total of \$2.42 million, which leaves few funds to carry into FY22.

If anything, the urgent need for program funding has grown during the pandemic, as victims of family abuse have been subjected to prolonged periods of isolation with their abuser; and stressors, such as COVID-19-related job losses and additional child care burdens from school and day care closures, have increased the likelihood of domestic violence incidents.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and we hope you will agree to provide \$3 million in FY22 to help empower victims of domestic violence to escape their abuse.

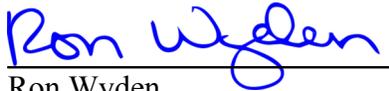
Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



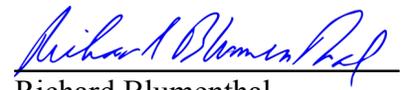
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United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema  
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Chris Van Hollen  
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Dianne Feinstein  
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Jacky Rosen  
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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



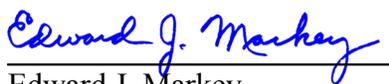
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United States Senator



Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



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Kirsten Gillibrand  
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Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

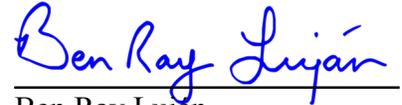


Raphael G. Warnock  
United States Senator



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Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



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Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator



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Tina Smith  
United States Senator



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Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



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Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator