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Letter to the Editor, November 17, 2015

I fully support Senator Pat Toomey's Fairness for Crime Victims Act of 2015, discussed in a recent Public Opinion article on October 16, 2015. The bill's increase in the amount of money the Crime Victims Fund pays out to both victims of crime and victim advocacy groups is necessary and will serve to provide resources to Franklin County and other counties in need across the state. Senator Toomey's inquiry into the past use of Fund monies exposed gross misappropriations, and his current bill will ensure that the proposed \$62.5 million increase to the fund in 2016 is properly allocated toward the victims it was created to help.

In 2013, Franklin County was blessed with the Over the Rainbow Children's Advocacy Center, a center committed to providing services and support to suspected child abuse victims and their families in a compassionate, child friendly environment. The increase in funding to the Crime Victims Fund through Senator Toomey's bill will provide other counties with the opportunity to create similar centers and improve currently underfunded programs. As Board President of Over the Rainbow, and as District Attorney, I absolutely recognize the importance of the availability of resources for victims of crime, and this bill will provide a long-term solution to the funding deficit statewide.

Senator Toomey has also sponsored a bipartisan bill, Stopping Medication Abuse and Protecting Seniors Act, which if passed, will cut down on "doctor shopping." The bill outlines drug management programs that can serve important roles in preventing prescription drug abuse by assigning at-risk patients to designated doctors and pharmacies. The goal of the bill is to reduce dependency on opioid painkillers, but it will eventually also have a positive impact on the use of illicit drugs like heroin as well. The sponsors intelligently aim to ultimately minimize new addictions to heroin, as heroin has become a much cheaper alternative to opioid painkillers when they are no longer prescribed or when an addict simply runs out. As opioid and heroin overdoses continue to increase in unprecedented numbers across the county, state, and throughout our nation, this attentive and timely legislation will help prevent opioid addiction from ever occurring in the first place.