



*The Office of Victim Advocate (OVA) fully supports the Justice Reinvestment Initiative. As a package, these bills will allow Pennsylvania to build on efforts that identify inefficiencies, then reinvest those savings into programs and services that have been proven effective in reducing crime and recidivism. OVA is committed to serving more victims, more effectively. OVA emphatically supports efforts to expand the Crime Victims Act, and reinvesting dollars in victims' services.*

## Bill Background

In 2011, Pennsylvania enacted Acts 122 and 196, which ran until 2017. In 2015, the second round of justice reinvestment began with the formation of the Justice Reinvestment Working Group. The group reviewed analysis and discussed policy options. In the summer of 2017, a report was released which outlined six policy options that would build on the success of the first round:

- (1) make time served for short sentences to state prison more predictable
- (2) advance the state's approach to funding and supporting county probation
- (3) strengthen support for victims
- (4) improve pretrial decision making
- (5) expand guidance provided by sentencing guidelines
- (6) increase parole supervision

In early 2018, Senator Greenleaf introduced the legislation, a three-bill package SB1070, SB1071, and SB1072. In March 2018, Senator Hughes worked with the Office of Victim Advocate to bolster this package with amendments to SB1072. In short, SB1070 intends to improve county probation supports and services; SB1071 makes improvements to parole supervision; and SB1072 would expand the Crime Victims Act to serve more victims, more effectively. It is important to look at these three bills as a package, for example SB1070 is also the bill that would provide authorization for the savings derived from JRI overall to be reinvested into victims' services and county probation.

## What These Bills Do

SB1072 amends the Crime Victim Act with the goal of serving more crime victims, more effectively. Notable improvements include the following:

- (1) requires police officers to provide written notice of victims' services information at the scene
- (2) increases coverage for crime victim compensation
- (3) removes barriers to compensation of homicide burial expenses for surviving families
- (4) requires prosecutors to notify OVA in personal crime injury cases so parole notifications can be facilitated
- (5) provides technical changes to the act to reflect the independence of OVA
- (6) merges multiple funds into a singular Crime Victim Services and Compensation Fund

## What These Bills Do Not Do

The Justice Reinvestment Initiative does not violate a victim's right to provide input before the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole (PBPP). OVA is fully committed to facilitating every right for every victim who is registered with the office. As a matter of practice, any victims of crime are extended all the rights and services of the Crime Victims Act allows, including those that are not explicitly outlined in law as personal injury crimes as defined under Titles 18 or 75. OVA, in conjunction with the PBPP, does this because victims of theft, burglary, criminal attempt, human trafficking etc. are victims of crime and should be afforded all the same rights, notifications, input and services as those defined as "personal injury crimes."



**This package makes significant improvements to the Crime Victims' Compensation Act, one of which will ensure that no family member ever has to bear the financial responsibility of burying a loved one killed in a homicide. As the act stands now, PCCD must reduce or deny a claim if it is deemed that a person was contributing in any manner towards their own death, ie had drugs in their pocket, was engaging in a fight that escalated to someone taking their life, etc. The family who is left with the trauma should never be required to bear the burden of another's criminal conduct.**

- Jennifer Storm, Pennsylvania Victim Advocate