



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Office of Victim Advocate Reaches Over 2,600 Victims Since May 2015 *"Government That Works" Success with Notification Process*

Harrisburg, PA – Commonwealth Victim Advocate Jennifer R. Storm today announced that since their new partnership with the Pennsylvania State Police in May 2015, the office has successfully reached out to 2,683 victims of court-designated sexually violent predators (SVPs).

Through a Memorandum of Understanding signed last year with the state police, the Office of Victim Advocate (OVA) gained access to the PA Sex Offender Registration Tool which identified victims of SVPs so OVA can notify them throughout the criminal justice process in a timely and sensitive manner.

"The staff of OVA have been diligently researching old cases to ensure that every victim is found, notified and informed of their rights regarding their offender's status," said Storm. "Our partnership has empowered thousands of victims and increased the safety, security and overall sensitivity with which victims of sexual violent predators are notified."

The number of victims identified through the new notification partnership is significantly higher than in 2014's 497. Bringing the state police and the OVA together on this project is a perfect example of "Government That Works" to better serve the citizens of the Commonwealth.

On December 20, 2011, Pennsylvania's Adam Walsh bill was signed into law, bringing the commonwealth into compliance with the federal Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act. This law assigned responsibility to the state police to notify victims when a sexually violent predator registers with the state police Megan's Law Unit and when the offender changes his or her address or place of employment.

"Last May, the state police transferred the victim notification responsibility to the office which is best suited, and with better resources, to interact with and offer services to victims," said Pennsylvania State Police Major Scott C. Price. "The OVA has since markedly expanded the number of victims on which they maintain current information. The state police now dedicates our resources to managing the offenders – and OVA will continue to dedicate their resources to providing services to victims in what we see as a win for all stakeholders," added Price.

This project is funded through a subgrant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, the federal Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehension, Registering, and Tracking (SMART) Support for Adam Walsh Act Implementation Grant Program.

For more information on the Office of Victim Advocate, visit their website at www.ova.pa.gov.
For more information on the Pennsylvania State Police, visit their website at www.psp.pa.gov.

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