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## **Over \$4.4 Million Collected in Restitution for Pennsylvania Crime Victims as a Result of Reform Package**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Pennsylvania Victim Advocate Jennifer Storm applauds the legislature for passing State Representative Bryan Barbin’s House Bill 1167 last year that produced over \$4.4 million dollars from state tax intercept for restitution collection. Rep. Barbin’s bill was one in a package of restitution reform bills that were introduced in conjunction with the Restitution in Pennsylvania Task Force convened by the Office of Victim Advocate (OVA).

In 2011, the OVA convened the Restitution in Pennsylvania Task Force, which included members from the PA Board of Probation and Parole, PA Department of Corrections, Pennsylvania State Police, Attorney General’s Office, PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Administrative Office of PA Courts, PA Coalition Against Rape, state legislators, judges, district attorneys, legal advocates, criminal defense lawyers, clerks of court, county prison wardens and other law enforcement stakeholders.

“The goal of the task force was to maximize the reimbursement of financial losses to crime victims, while balancing the needs of victims, the community and offenders,” Storm said. “Yet, here we are several years later and only one bill has been passed, and that’s Rep. Barbin’s HB 1167.”

The Task Force conducted a thorough review of restitution processes at the state and local level in order to identify gaps and develop recommendations/solutions to maximize the justice systems’ effectiveness. These findings are offered in [The Restitution in Pennsylvania Task Force Report](#) (pdf).

Rep. Barbin’s legislation recommended that “The General Assembly should consider enacting or amending statute to require the Department of Revenue and Pennsylvania Lottery to pay any state judicial debt to include overdue restitution, costs and/or fines from any state income tax refunds and/ or lottery winnings.”

As a result of Rep. Barbin’s bill, over \$4.4 million in fines, costs and restitution has been collected by the court system in less than a year from its enactment.

“As a member of Pennsylvania’s Task Force on Restitution, we helped to draft and pass Act 93,” said Bryan L. Kline, Westmoreland County Clerk of Courts. “This key legislative fix has saved the state over \$4 million, through the collection of state income tax dollars from criminal defendants that owe court fees, while giving crime victims the justice that they deserve through restitution payments.” “Harrisburg must first look to finding solutions to our spending and collect the monies that are owed to the commonwealth, counties, and crime victims.” “Anytime we can put money in the General Budget Fund without raising taxes, is a win for hardworking Pennsylvanians and our commonwealth.”

"I am thrilled with this result and I am urging legislators to review the remaining bills in both chambers and pass these common sense reforms to ensure we are using every best practice to collect restitution for crime victims and the commonwealth," Storm said.

These are the remaining bills that require action:

- HB 280 (Delozier) Amends Title 42 to provide for the deduction of restitution, fees, fines and costs from bail monies that would be otherwise returnable to a defendant.
- HB 236 (Corbin) Amends Title 42 to authorize wage attachment for the payment of restitution, fines, and costs. This bill maintains first priority status for support payments and grants second priority to restitution. Current law governing the attachment of wages gives priority status only to support obligations.
- HB 234 (D. Costa) Amends Title 42 to require that each county establish an internal unit dedicated to the collection of restitution, fines, fees, and other court-imposed obligations. Counties that outsource collections are not subject to the requirement. The bill also enhances an existing data-collection mandate.
- HB 285 (Stephens) provides for mandatory deductions from inmates' wages and deposits made to inmates' personal accounts for the fulfillment of restitution, costs, fees, and other court-ordered obligations. Current law authorizes, but does not require such deductions.
- SB 126 (Boscola) Amends Title 42, in sentencing, providing for lottery winnings intercept.
- SB 346 (Boscola) Amends Title 42 to require funds to be deducted from inmate accounts in order to satisfy outstanding required restitution payments.

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**MEDIA CONTACT:** Jennifer Storm 717.756.9741

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