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## **Office of Victim Advocate Expands Victim Services in Philadelphia DAs Office**

**HARRISBURG** – The Pennsylvania Office of Victim Advocate and the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office today announced a collaborative partnership to better serve crime victims when an offender is sentenced to state prison.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office (DAO), the Office of Victim Advocate (OVA) will place a Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) in the DAO who will assist in the continuum of victim services from the county to the state. On behalf of the victim advocate and the district attorney, the VAC will also assist victims at sentencing and throughout the offender’s incarceration and possible parole.

“As part of Governor Wolf’s goal of creating a *government that works* in Pennsylvania, and given the large volume of criminal cases in Philadelphia County, creating this sub-office will improve victim services and expand the response of the criminal justice system to the needs and anxieties of crime victims,” said Pennsylvania Victim Advocate Jennifer Storm. “After an offender is sentenced to the state, the victim’s case then transfers to the OVA which often creates confusion for them as to whom to contact. This partnership will ensure crime victims have a point person in Philadelphia to address any concerns and ensure inclusion in all the post-sentencing processes.”

“Anytime the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia can come together to make the services it provides to victims easier to access – it’s a positive partnership – so thank you to the Office of Victim Advocate,” said R. Seth Williams, Philadelphia District Attorney. “I’m excited that this new agreement will help make sure we do all we can to deliver fast, efficient services to crime victims, people who may be overwhelmed by the criminal justice process. Now they can just call one office.”

The OVA was established in 1995 and diligently works to provide victims of crime with notifications, support and advocacy services. This is the first collaboration of this kind and first sub-office for the OVA in a non-state entity.

For more information on the Office of Victim Advocate, visit their website at [www.ova.pa.gov](http://www.ova.pa.gov).

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