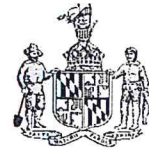


*STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR*



*WES MOORE,
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Dear Chairman Smith, Vice-chair Waldstreicher, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Governor Wes Moore, I urge a favorable report of HB575/SB471, Criminal Procedure - Victim Compensation - Alterations (Victim Compensation Reform Act of 2024).

In Maryland, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB) within the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP) is the entity responsible for administering the state victims compensation program. This legislation seeks to expand eligibility, remove barriers, and improve administrative processes when applying for CICB benefits.

Major Components of this legislation will:

- Expand the definition of a dependent to include a domestic partner, the definition of an applicable injury to ensure that psychological injuries resulting from any crime are covered, and expand eligibility to the domestic partner, dependent minor, or an adult under the legal guardianship of the victim.
- Redefine the role of the Board such that it is an appellate body over initial decisions made by the staff to award compensation.
- Increase the number of CICB board members from 5 to 7.
- Remove the requirements that a crime has to be reported within 48 hours, and that victims must "cooperate fully" with law enforcement.
- Require the Board to make prompt emergency awards for funeral expenses, crime scene cleanup, and one-time emergency relocation expenses.

When the Moore-Miller Administration took office we found it was far too difficult and took far too long for crime victims to get the compensation they are entitled to. Having a more accessible

and effective CICB would provide community-violence interventionists, trauma-recovery specialists, law enforcement, and victim services providers an important tool and tangible resources to help meet their needs, connect them to services, and set them on a path towards recovery. Financial compensation for expenses incurred as a result of being a victim of crime is an important aspect of helping to heal and rebuild the lives of those who have been victimized. It also plays an important role in helping prevent cycles of violence through its ability to alleviate economic conditions for crime victims and assist in relocation of victims who may be under threat of further victimization.

Sincerely,
Myles Hicks
Deputy Legislative Officer
Office of Governor Wes Moore