

SB

105

FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA
2001 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: SB 105
 () Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Revenue
 Title: Victims' Rights / Prisoners' PFDs BRU: Revenue Operations
 Component: Permanent Fund Dividend

Sponsor: Senator Halford Component Number: 981
 Requester: Senate Judiciary Committee

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2001) cost: 0.0

Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2002 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

As it relates to the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend Division, this legislation expands the reach of state statute to withhold dividends from Alaskans convicted of criminal offenses. The legislation (Section 9, AS 43.23.005(d)) would expand the number of non-eligible Alaskans to include people convicted or incarcerated on a misdemeanor charge during the dividend eligibility year if they also have a prior conviction for a felony. Existing statute already denies the dividend to applicants convicted or incarcerated during the eligibility year on a felony charge or his or her third misdemeanor.

The Dividend Division does not expect this legislation to have a fiscal impact on the operating budget of the dividend program.

It is not possible to estimate the number of applicants who might lose their dividend eligibility under this legislation. However, it should be noted that denying dividends to some of the applicants covered by this legislation could actually deny the funds to creditors of those applicants, including the Child Support Enforcement Division, state student loan program, private businesses and others.

Prepared by: Nanci A. Jones, Director Phone 465-4785
 Division: Permanent Fund Dividend Division Date/Time Feb. 22, 2001, 1 p.m.
 Approved by: Larry Persily, Deputy Commissioner Date Feb. 24, 2001
 Agency: Department of Revenue

For distribution information, call the Governor's Legislative Office

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2001 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: SB 105
 () Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Law
 Title "An Act relating to victims' rights; . . . an office of BRU Criminal Division/Civil Division
victims' rights; . . . compensation of victims of violent crimes . . ." Component Human Services
 Sponsor Senator Halford 1st-4th Jud Dist, Crim Apps/Spec Lit
 Requester Senate Judiciary Committee Component No. 2198-99/2261/79/01/03/06

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type)						
TOTAL	0.0	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****

Estimate of any current year (FY2001) cost: 0.0

Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2002 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

SB 105 establishes in the legislative branch the Office of Victims' Rights, directed by the victims' advocate, effective July 1, 2002. The victims' advocate will advocate on behalf of crime victims in felony cases in the courts of the state and investigate complaints of crime victims in felony and certain class A misdemeanor cases that they have been denied their rights under the constitution and laws of the state.

The potential fiscal impact from enactment of this law on the Department of Law is dependent on the philosophy and depth of involvement of the victims' advocate. At a minimum, the length of time required for cases in which the victims' advocate participates will increase, simply by virtue of having an additional attorney involved. The potential that the victims' advocate will be at odds with the prosecutor over matters involving trial strategy, tactics, and plea negotiations would add additional time and expense. These costs are speculative, and the department cannot assign a cost without additional experience.

Prepared by: Joan M. Kasson Phone 465-5370
 Division Attorney General's Office Date/Time 2/27/01 12:15 PM
 Approved by: Kathryn Daughhete for Bruce M. Botelho, Attorney General Date 2/27/01
 Agency Department of Law

For distribution information, call the Governor's Legislative Office

FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA
2001 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: SB 105
 () Publish Date: _____

Title: An Act relating to victims' rights; relating to estab-
 lishing an office of victims' rights; relating to compensation....

Dept. Affected: Corrections
 BRU: 271
 Component: Administrative Services

Sponsor: Senator Halford

Requester: Senator Judiciary

Component Number: 697

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
Personal Services	43.5	43.5	43.5	43.5	43.5	43.5
Travel						
Contractual	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Supplies	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Equipment	2.5					
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	47.0	44.5	44.5	44.5	44.5	44.5

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	47.0	44.5	44.5	44.5	44.5	44.5
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type)						
TOTAL						

Estimate of any current year (FY2001) cost: 0.0

Check this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2002 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time	1	1	1	1	1	1
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Section 9 of this legislation amends AS 43.23.005(d) which would deny PFD eligibility for people who are convicted and incarcerated for a misdemeanor and they had been previously convicted of a felony, or two or more misdemeanors. The Department of Corrections has previously asked for a Statistical Technician I position to accommodate appeals and information requests resulting from PFD denials. The data and word processing unit will be unable to carry out their daily operations if more appeals and computer programming are added without a position.

Prepared by: Candace Brower
 Division: Commissioner's Office
 Approved by: Margaret Pugh
 Agency: Department of Corrections

Phone 465-4652
 Date/Time 2/22/01 9:30 AM
 Date 2/22/01

For distribution information, call the Governor's Legislative Office



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senator Rick Halford

President of the Senate

Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 105

While in Session:
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
907-465-4958

While in Interim:
P.O. Box 670190
Chugiak, AK 99567
907-694-4958

"The Crime Victims' Rights and Advocacy Act of 2001"

On November 8, 1994, the voters of Alaska ratified an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Alaska, which provides specific rights to victims of crime. The overwhelming approval rate -- 86.6% in favor -- was testament of Alaskans' belief that:

"Crime victims, as defined by law, shall have the following rights as provided by law; the right to be reasonably protected from the accused through the imposition of appropriate bail or conditions of release by the court; the right to confer with the prosecution; the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness during all phases of the criminal and juvenile justice process; the right to timely disposition of the case following the arrest of the accused; the right to obtain information about and be allowed to be present at all criminal or juvenile proceedings where the accused has the right to be present; the right to be allowed to be heard, upon request, at sentencing, before or after conviction or juvenile adjudication, and at any proceeding where the accused's release from custody is considered; the right to restitution from the accused; and the right to be informed, upon request, of the accused's escape or release from custody before or after conviction or juvenile adjudication."

---- ARTICLE I, SECTION 24, ALASKA CONSTITUTION

Passage of SB 105 will put in place a mechanism to guarantee the practical application of this very important Constitutional Amendment. It is time for victims to have advocacy when dealing with a judicial system so heavily weighted to the benefit of criminals, and based on a process replete with technicalities and legal jargon, rendering it virtually indecipherable to anyone other than the attorneys.

As was brought out in testimony on similar legislation last session, "While the criminals and the prosecution have their attorneys, the victims are too often left to sit alone in the shadow of justice." I urge your support for this legislation.



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senator Rick Halford

President of the Senate

Sectional Analysis

While in Session:
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
907-465-4958

While in Interim:
P.O. Box 670190
Chugiak, AK 99567
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Senate Bill 105 "Office of Victims Rights"

Section 1 of the bill provides a short title.

Section 2 of the bill allows advocate to make statement at time of sentencing when requested by the victim.

Section 3 of the bill increases the compensation available to victims of crime under AS 18.67.

Section 4 of the bill brings the victims' advocate under legislative ethics.

Section 5 of the bill amends AS 24 by creating a new chapter dealing with the Office of the Victims' Rights which is created in the legislative branch. The following sections are created:

- AS 24.65.010 creates the Office of Victims' Rights
- AS 24.65.020 establishes appointment procedures
- AS 24.65.030 establishes qualifications
- AS 24.65.040 defines the term of office
- AS 24.65.050 provides for removal of the Victims' Advocate
- AS 24.65.060 lists the salary for the Victims' Advocate
- AS 24.65.070 allows employment of staff and establishes their duties
- AS 24.65.080 office space and administration for OVA
- AS 24.65.090 requires advocate to adopt regulations
- AS 24.65.100 establishes when the victims' advocate can act.
- AS 24.65.110 delineates advocacy and access to records
- AS 24.65.120 specifies how and when the advocate may investigate complaints of denial of crime victims rights
- AS 24.65.130 provides subpoena power to victims' advocate
- AS 24.65.140 requires consultation with a justice agency prior to report
- AS 24.65.150 specifies the advocate's duties upon completion of investigation
- AS 24.65.160 permits advocate to publish opinions and recommendations

AS 24.65.170 requires advocate to publish annual report
AS 24.65.180 limits judicial challenge of advocate's actions
AS 24.65.190 provides immunity to advocate
AS 24.65.200 provides evidentiary privilege against being compelled to testify to advocate
AS 24.65.210 sets out criminal penalty for obstruction of advocate's duties
AS 24.65.250 definitions

Section 6 of the bill specifies that the Victims' Advocate and staff are in the partially exempt category.

Section 7 of the bill provides option of adopting longevity pay provisions to the Victims' Advocate.

Section 8 of the bill excepts OVR employees from using the conditional service retirement benefit for legislative employees.

Section 9 of the bill expands PFD ineligibility to a person who has been convicted of a misdemeanor and has one prior felony conviction.

Section 10 of the bill amends the public notice statute to conform with the changes in Section 9 and provides that the proceeds of the PFD forfeiture may be used to fund the Office of Victims' Rights.

Section 11 of the bill exempts regulations promulgated by the OVR from gubernatorial review.

Section 12 of the bill exempts the Victims' Advocate from record keeping requirements.

Section 13 of the bill requires that sunset review of agencies consider interaction with OVR.

Section 14 of the bill names OVR as state agency for purposes of state publications.

Section 15 & 16 of the bill provides court rule change notice.

Section 17 of the bill allows the Director of LAA to purchase supplies and equipment and establish office space for the new OVR in FY 01 to allow for the opening of the office in FY 02.

Sections 18 and 19 of the bill are the effective date clauses.



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
Senator Rick Halford
President of the Senate

While in Session:
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
907-465-4958

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Senate Bill 105
Office of Victims' Rights

State Justice Agency Financial Information

Department of Law - Criminal Division

	FY 00 Actual	FY 01 Authorized	FY 02 Budget
BRU total	12,556.4	13,144.4	14,747.8

Department of Administration - Legal and Advocacy Services

	FY 00 Actual	FY 01 Authorized	FY 02 Budget
Public Advocacy	8,883.5	8,947.8	9,827.4
Public Defender	9,428.0	9,510.3	11,013.9
BRU total	18,311.5	18,459.1	20,843.3

The above represents annual state spending of \$ 35,589,100 for publicly funded criminal defense and state prosecution.

The Office of Victims' Advocacy, established by Senate Bill 105, has a projected annual funding level of \$450,000.

**National Institute of Justice and National Center for Victims of Crime
Release Landmark Study
December 29, 1998**

ARLINGTON, VA. The National Center for Victims of Crime (formerly the National Victim Center) announced the long-awaited release of its study of crime victims' rights, including the largest survey ever conducted of crime victims. The study is the subject of a Research in Brief released by the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, which funded the project.

The study's many significant findings include:

- Victims in states with strong victims' rights laws were more likely to be kept informed and to participate in the criminal justice system.
- Even in states with strong statutory and constitutional protections for crime victims' rights, large numbers of victims did not receive many of their rights. Half of all victims surveyed were not notified or consulted in advance of plea agreements, even in those states where they had a right to be informed. Only a third of victims, even in the states with strong protection, were notified of the defendant's bail release. Nearly half of victims surveyed, even in states with strong protection, were not notified of the sentencing hearing, a hearing they had the legal right to attend and to participate in by presenting a statement.
- There was a general failure to order and collect restitution from convicted offenders, even where crime victims had a clear legal right to such restitution.
- Where victims' rights had strong legal protection, crime victims were more likely to have positive feelings about each aspect of the criminal justice system, from efforts to apprehend the perpetrator to the fairness of the sentence.
- A substantial number of criminal justice officials interviewed were not aware that various crime victims' rights were required by law, rather than just agency policy or practice. Many officials were also unclear about which criminal justice agency had the duty to provide various crime victims' rights.

This study shows that victims' rights laws matter, and that they improve crime victims' satisfaction with each and every aspect of the criminal justice system, according to David Beatty, the Center's Director of Public Policy and Project Director for the study. Unfortunately, it also reveals that the strong state statutes and state constitutional amendments that are already on the books have not been enough to guarantee victims' rights.

The study compared two groups of states -- those with strong legal protections for the rights of crime victims and those with weaker protection -- and focused on the rights of victims to be informed, to be present, and to be heard during the criminal justice process, and on the victims' right to restitution from convicted offenders. It sought to determine the extent to which legal rights for crime victims were being implemented, whether the scope and strength of the law was directly correlated to the increased provision of information and participatory opportunities to crime victims, and the opinions of victims regarding the criminal justice system. Over 1300 crime victims were interviewed regarding their experience with the criminal justice system. Criminal justice and victim service professionals at the state and local levels were also surveyed. With few exceptions, there has been a relative lack of sound scientific research into the effect of crime victims' rights laws, noted Dr. Dean Kilpatrick, of the National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center at the Medical University of South Carolina, who served as Research Consultant for the project. This study presents concrete data that will be used by advocates and policymakers to improve the nation's response to victims of crime.

For more information contact
David Beatty
Director, Public Policy
703-276-2880

may 1998

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Office for Victims of Crime



New
Directions
from the
Field:
*Victims' Rights and Services
for the 21st Century*

NCJ 170600

ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION FOR

techniques to use with victims, including child and elderly victims, victims who do not speak English, victims from diverse cultures, and victims with disabilities, including those who are blind or deaf or who have cognitive or developmental disabilities. Brochures describing victims' rights and services should be developed in the languages used by crime victims in each community, and all brochures and critical victim information written in English should include a sentence offering the literature in other languages as needed. Special provisions should be made for communicating with victims who are blind or visually impaired using audiotapes, special computer disks, Braille, or other communication technologies. Service providers should be trained to use sign language interpreters and TDD technology to communicate with victims who are deaf or hard of hearing.

VICTIMS' RIGHTS RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #12

Victims of crime should receive assistance in exercising their participatory rights. Advocates should be available to explain rights to victims, help them to exercise those rights and, when necessary, serve as their representatives in court and other key justice processes when victims are underage or incapacitated or if representation is otherwise appropriate.

One of the greatest barriers to victims participating in justice proceedings is their not having the means to do so. Many victims cannot afford to pay for parking, child care, or time off from work. Others do not have the resources to cover transportation costs to courts, especially if the trial or hearing is held outside their community. In these cases, every effort should be made to facilitate victim participation by providing special services such as child care, or paying for transportation and lodging expenses. For example, in the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building bombing cases, government and non-profit agencies and the private sector formed a partnership to provide funding for victim travel expenses after the trial was moved from Oklahoma City to Denver, Colorado in 1997. In addition, the court in Denver set up a closed-circuit television communication in Oklahoma City to allow victims there to view the proceedings in Denver. New uses of technology should be considered to provide access to trials and other proceedings for victims who are physically unable to attend them. Furthermore, more consideration must be given to the tremendous diversity among victims in the design and delivery of victim services.

VICTIMS' RIGHTS RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #18

Victims should have standing to enforce their rights, and sanctions should be applied to criminal and juvenile justice professionals who deny victims their fundamental rights.

Although more than 27,000 state and federal laws have been enacted to protect and enforce the interests, rights, and services for crime victims, the *consistent* implementation and enforcement of these laws is an area of great concern. Victims report that criminal and juvenile justice officials at times disregard their statutory and constitutional rights, and that they have no legal recourse when their rights are violated. States should enact provisions that give victims measures to enforce their rights when they are disregarded.

While limited legal remedies such as court-ordered injunctions and writs of mandamus are generally available to force criminal justice personnel to comply with the law, states are beginning to pass laws that provide specific statutory remedies and recourse for crime victims. A Maryland statute enables victims of violent crimes to apply for "leave to appeal" any final order that denies victims certain basic rights.⁹⁰ Arizona law grants victims the right to challenge postconviction release decisions resulting from hearings at which they were denied the opportunity to receive notice, attend, or be heard. Arizona law allows victims to sue for money damages any government entity responsible for the "intentional, knowing or grossly negligent violation" of the victims' rights.⁹¹

It is critical that effective measures be available to remedy violations of victims' rights, including authority for the government to obtain redress through applications for mandamus and appeal. The need for this reform in federal proceedings is illustrated by the first trial in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, in which the trial court ruled that victims would not be allowed to attend the trial if they wished to be heard at the sentencing stage. On review, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals held that victims had no standing to assert their right to be present and that the government could not enforce that right by appeal or by seeking a mandatory order.⁹²

VICTIMS' RIGHTS RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #19

States and the federal government should create compliance enforcement programs, sometimes referred to as victim ombudsman programs, to help facilitate the implementation of victims' rights.

State victims' rights compliance enforcement programs oversee justice officials' and agencies' compliance with crime victims' statutory and constitutional rights and investigate crime victim complaints relevant to those rights being violated.²³ A few states have created such programs within an existing agency or have established a new, state-level oversight authority. In initiating such a program, officials should consider the importance of meaningful remedies and sanctions for noncompliance with victims' rights laws; and ensure that victims, victim service providers, advocacy groups, and victim-sensitive justice professionals are involved in the program planning process. In addition, justice agencies should consider increasing crime or court surcharges to support a compliance enforcement functions, and should evaluate overall compliance enforcement system.

Innovative approaches to victims' rights oversight have been implemented in several states:

- The Minnesota Office of the Crime Victims Ombudsman (OCVO) protects the rights of victims by investigating statutory violations of victims' rights laws and mistreatment by criminal justice practitioners. OCVO is authorized to initiate its own investigation of alleged violations, recommend corrective action, and make its findings public to both the legislature and the press.
- The South Carolina Office of the Crime Victims' Ombudsman is empowered to act as a referral entity for victims in need of services, a liaison between victims and the criminal and juvenile justice systems in the course of their interaction, and a resolver of complaints made by victims against elements of those systems and against victim assistance programs. In addressing complaints, the South Carolina Ombudsman program is not limited to inquiries into violations of specific statutory rights, but may review other conduct that is potentially unfair to victims.²⁴
- Colorado has recently enacted a state-level coordinating committee that serves an ombudsman function for victims' rights implementation.²⁵ The Colorado Victims' Compensation and Assistance Coordinating Committee and its Victims' Rights Act (VRA) subcommittee help victims enforce their rights by overseeing the actions of local government agencies. The subcommittee and full coordinating committee have the power to investigate VRA violations and to recommend action with which an agency must comply to rectify victims' complaints. The two bodies also monitor the implementation of those suggestions and may refer issues of noncompliance to the governor or attorney general.²⁶
- Wisconsin has a state-level victims' services office—the Victim Resource Center (VRC)—which provides information and service referrals to victims and acts as a liaison between victims and

criminal justice agencies in resolving complaints concerning unlawful or inappropriate agency action. Though it lacks enforcement authority, the VRC protects victims' rights by investigating complaints and presenting its recommendations for corrective action to state criminal justice officials. The Wisconsin legislature is currently debating a measure that would prescribe remedies for violations of victims' rights laws and provide for the enforcement of Wisconsin's victims' rights constitutional amendment.⁹⁷

VICTIMS' RIGHTS RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #20

Federal crime victims' rights should apply in military proceedings.

The extensive range of information, notification, and participatory rights that have been enacted on the federal level should be fully implemented for victims' rights within military justice proceedings. Some victims' rights established at the federal level are not implemented in military courts. Restitution for victims is frequently ordered as part of sentences for federal crimes, but there is no authority to do so under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.⁹⁸ Moreover, the military justice system has failed to adopt "truth in sentencing" reforms and continues to parole offenders, a practice that generally has been abolished in federal criminal cases. The Uniform Code of Military Justice should be amended to make restitution mandatory.

VICTIMS' RIGHTS RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #21

Indian tribes should review their legislation, policies, and court systems to enhance the fundamental rights of Native American victims.

There are 621 federally recognized tribes in the United States; each of these tribes is a separate sovereign with legislative and adjudicatory authority. There are 242 separate tribal court systems, trial and appellate, as well as numerous traditional dispute resolution forums unique to each tribal culture.⁹⁹ While many major crimes that occur in Indian country are prosecuted in federal or state courts, tribes retain concurrent criminal jurisdiction over Native American defendants.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, tribal courts are often the sole forum for prosecuting crimes and juvenile offenses involving child abuse and domestic violence.

Tribes should analyze and amend their laws and policies, as well as observe and change procedures of their courts, law enforcement offices, and human services agencies in order to protect and enhance the fundamental rights of Native American victims. Tribes should

establish joint tribal-state and federal forums to ensure that Native American victims are not lost in the jurisdictional complications of Indian country. They should also train their leaders, justice personnel, and community members on prevention measures and effective responses to crime in Indian country.

Notwithstanding political pressures and lack of economic resources, a number of tribes have successfully implemented crime victims' rights ordinances, mandatory arrest policies for domestic violence, safe houses, community education projects, and an array of culturally appropriate systems for protecting Native American crime victims. Some tribes have included the rights of crime victims in their codes. For example, the Uniform Sentencing Policy of the Courts of the Navajo Nation includes the rights for victims to have input into plea agreements, proposed sentences, and restitution decisions. The Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Council passed a Children's Bill of Rights, and the Crow Tribal Council developed rights for domestic violence victims that are set forth in its Domestic Abuse Code.

From tribal police intervention to tribal court proceedings, the victims of violent crime in Indian country must have rights available to them. They must be informed of their rights, encouraged to exercise their rights, and be protected from further harm. This is the basic responsibility of a tribal criminal justice system.

Joseph Myers,
Executive Director,
National Indian Justice Center

VICTIMS' RIGHTS RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #22

Victims of crime should have rights at administrative proceedings, including the right to have a person of their choice accompany them to the proceedings, the right to input regarding the sanction, and the right to notification of the sanction.

Agencies and institutions that seek to hold their employees or students accountable for their alleged criminal or negligent behavior often do so through administrative proceedings, including disciplinary hearings on college campuses in sexual assault cases and other crimes that violate college rules. Governmental and private sector organizations also conduct administrative hearings when an employee is accused of misconduct, which sometimes also constitutes a criminal act. These hearings are held to determine whether an employee or student should be dismissed or sanctioned.

Victims often complain about their lack of rights and protections at these hearings. For example, at disciplinary hearings on college campuses and in schools, as well as administrative proceedings when criminal justice personnel are accused of conduct violations, victims are frequently not allowed such fundamental rights as the right to be accompanied by a person of their choice and the right to submit a victim impact statement before the offender is sanctioned. Agencies and institutions should review their disciplinary codes and ensure that

fundamental victims' rights are incorporated. In addition, all cases involving criminal conduct should be referred to law enforcement for further investigation.

State laws should be strengthened to ensure that these victims receive appropriate rights. For example, California recently amended its Education Code to provide victims of sexual assault and harassment in public schools with the rights to: be accompanied by a parent or other support person during testimony in disciplinary hearings; adequate notice prior to being called to testify; testify at a hearing closed to the public; and have evidence of irrelevant sexual history excluded.¹⁰¹ The law also requires school districts to take further steps to provide a nonthreatening environment for child victims by adopting procedures that have become the standard across the country for children who testify as witnesses in other legal proceedings. Support for the law was initiated by the Santa Monica-UCLA Rape Treatment Center after the rape of a 12-year-old middle school student in a Los Angeles school by a fellow student. She had to face the accused attacker, his parents, and his attorney alone during an expulsion hearing.¹⁰²

The *Student Right to Know Campus Security Act of 1990*,¹⁰³ and *The Campus Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights*¹⁰⁴ passed by Congress should be fully implemented. These laws should be amended to ensure that the same rights to be informed, present, and heard in criminal proceedings apply equally to disciplinary proceedings in school settings.

Other victims whose rights are woefully overlooked are victims of mentally ill offenders whose cases are adjudicated through an involuntary mental commitment process. Where applicable, these victims should receive the same rights as other victims, including the right to receive notice of release.

VICTIMS' RIGHTS RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #23

Criminal and juvenile justice agencies should establish a means of monitoring their own compliance with crime victims' rights laws and require public documentation showing that victims were provided their rights or indicating an appropriate reason why they were not. In addition, independent audits should be conducted of state and federal agency compliance with victims' rights laws.

Criminal and juvenile justice agencies and institutions should develop and implement policies and procedures to ensure that all

crime victims are afforded the opportunity to exercise their rights. Monitoring should be mandatory at all stages of the justice systems. Criminal and juvenile justice agencies should document whether or not crime victims receive notice of and an opportunity to exercise their rights and, if not, why not. Such documentation is a significant step toward holding officials accountable and will enable agencies to monitor their compliance with legal mandates.

Further information is needed about the level of state and federal compliance with victims' rights laws to determine how to improve implementation of these laws. This information should be obtained through independent audits that can evaluate levels of compliance and propose needed reforms to improve the system.

VICTIMS' RIGHTS RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FIELD #24

Introductory and continuing education for all criminal and juvenile justice professionals should address victims' rights, needs, and services, and incorporate involvement from crime victims themselves.

To increase compliance with victims' rights laws, states must make education on the rights of crime victims a priority during orientation and continuing education training programs for criminal and juvenile justice officials. Implementing victims' rights remains the responsibility of these officials. They must be educated about the importance of their victim-related responsibilities and sensitized to the critical needs of crime victims.

Training programs for law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges, as well as probation, parole, and corrections officials, have been developed and implemented on a broad scale through training and technical assistance grant projects funded by the Office for Victims of Crime. Some institutions responsible for educating and training these professionals are beginning to incorporate victim-related sensitivity training into their permanent curricula. In some states, such training is mandated by statute, but in others, the incorporation of victims' issues is voluntary.¹⁰⁵

Victim input into such educational programs is critical. Victim impact panels provide a vehicle for victims to tell justice professionals firsthand about the physical, financial, and emotional impact of crime. Developed by Mothers Against Drunk Driving as an educational tool in court-ordered probation programs for DUI offenders, and for youth offenders by the California Youth Authority, they are increasingly being