



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

## Bill to Expand Benefits for Crime Victims Signed Into Law

JIM RANNEY August 23, 2018

| ISSUE: **CRIME VICTIMS**



Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma) announces legislation (S.7993/A.10275) that expands the benefits available to eligible crime victims has been signed into law. Benefits for victims, who have not been physically injured, include reimbursement of crime scene cleanup and domestic violence shelter costs. The change will allow victims of hate crimes or domestic violence cases to apply for compensation for these expenses from the state Office of Victim Services.

"We must do everything in our power to help the healing process and reduce financial burdens for those who are victimized by crime," Senator Gallivan said. "This legislation will expand the support and resources the state currently offers to crime victims."

The legislation was sponsored by Senator Gallivan and Assemblywoman Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes (D-Buffalo).

"I am proud to sponsor this legislation to help support innocent crime victims," Assemblywoman Peoples-Stokes said. "I would like to thank Governor Cuomo for signing this important piece of legislation that will be instrumental in helping to reimburse expenses for domestic violence and hate crime victims here in New York state."

The law takes effect 180 days after being signed by the Governor and applies to claims filed on or after the effective date. Victims who have not been physically injured are eligible for certain benefits from the Office of Victim Services if the charges in connection with the crime include criminal obstruction of breathing or blood circulation; certain menacing, harassment, aggravated harassment, criminal contempt and stalking offenses; and hate crimes.

Under current law, victims of these crimes who are not physically injured are eligible to seek compensation from the agency for a variety of crime-related expenses, such as medical bills related to counseling and moving expenses, but crime scene cleanup and shelter costs are excluded. The new legislation amends that law to cover these expenses.

In addition to this expanded eligibility, the Office of Victim Services has implemented other initiatives to help ensure that crime victims and their families get the compensation and support they need to recover. The agency recently awarded more than \$20 million in grants over three years so victim assistance programs can hire case managers who will streamline

and improve services they provide. It is also partnering with the Office for the Aging and two nonprofits to invest \$8.4 million in state and federal funds through 2020 to improve and expand services for vulnerable adults at risk of abuse, neglect or financial exploitation.

These additional services and assistance come at no cost to taxpayers. Funding for crime victims' compensation and the cost of the agency's day-to-day operations comes entirely from the fines, mandatory surcharges and crime victim assistance fees that certain offenders must pay following conviction in New York State or federal courts.

The Office of Victim Services provides a safety net for crime victims and/or their family members who have been victimized through no fault of their own and have no other means of assistance. The agency compensates eligible individuals and family members for medical and counseling expenses, funeral and burial expenses, lost wages and support, and loss or damage of essential personal property, in addition to other assistance.

In addition, the agency funds 222 victim assistance programs that provide direct services, such as counseling, crisis intervention, advocacy and legal assistance, across New York State. For more information about services offered by the agency, including eligibility guidelines, visit [www.ovs.ny.gov](http://www.ovs.ny.gov) or call 1-800-247-8035.

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## 2017-S7993

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to the reimbursement of shelter costs and crime scene cleanup for certain, non-injured victims

March 16, 2018

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Patrick M. Gallivan**

Do you support this bill?

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