



DAVE YOST

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

Policy and Legislation Section
614-728-995-2273

SB 36 Proponent Testimony
Michael Rodgers, Director of Policy and Legislation
Ohio Attorney General's Office
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Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, and Ranking Member Leland, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to deliver proponent testimony today on Substitute Senate Bill 36. This bill takes important steps to modernize the crime victim's compensation program administered by the Attorney General's Office.

The Crime Victim's Compensation Program exists to help victims and their families recover certain expenses incurred as a result of a violent crime. These costs include medical expenses, counseling services, and lost wages.

Since the program's inception in 1976, our office has paid out over \$386.3 million dollars to victims and families. Over the years, changes were made to the program that limited our ability to assist some victims of crime. SB 36 removes many of those barriers by expanding the definition of a victim to include family members who witness or arrive on the scene of a violent crime, payments to individuals who suffer trauma so severe it impedes normal daily activities, and by eliminating the criminal history lookback for victims. SB 36 ensures our office will have enhanced opportunities to serve families in their darkest hour.

While our office supports the changes proposed in SB 36, we have also been working with the bill sponsors on two amendments to help with our administration of this program. Our Crime Victims Section seeks a delicate balance to both maximize our impact on individuals that are eligible to receive these resources, while also safeguarding this finite funding so that subsequent victims can receive compensation.

In the coming weeks, we hope to have amendments offered to the bill that will pause payments if someone becomes incarcerated, and to return to a reasonable statute of limitations for when claims must be filed with our office.

In closing, I want to thank Senators Manning and Huffman for their leadership on this topic, and for their willingness to engage with our office on possible amendments. I would be happy to take any questions the committee may have at this time.