

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Minority Sykes and Members of the Senate Finance committee:

My name is Brenda Glass, I am the founder and Executive Director of the Brenda Glass Trauma Center. Our mission is to provide comprehensive outreach, case management, peer support and mental health services to underserved, hard to reach victims of violent crime. I humbly submit a request to create two new line items to the Ohio budget to establish stable funding for Trauma Recovery Centers and Victims Compensation on behalf of Ohio's underserved victims of crime.

I am a state licensed independent clinical social worker, with years of experience in case management, chemical dependency counseling, and trauma recovery therapeutic healing support. We work to remove barriers to care and enable survivors to envision hope and actively engage in healing holistically. We strive to meet each client where they are, physically and emotionally – providing support that addresses practical needs such as safe housing, financial entitlements, basic needs, and legal advocacy, as well as individualized therapy. The types of trauma that are treated include domestic violence, sexual assaults and other physical assaults, criminal motor vehicle accidents, community-related violence, and people who have lost a loved one to homicide. The trauma recovery center model acknowledges that trauma can have a devastating impact on people at an emotional, physical, spiritual, and financial level, and our staff is dedicated to helping people heal from violence in all these areas.

In 2017 in collaboration with the Alliance for Safety and Justice, the Ohio Attorney General's office launched the Ohio Trauma Recovery Center System of Care to support underserved victims of crime on their healing journey. I am honored to have been one of the first Trauma Recovery Center directors in the state of Ohio. I serve on the steering committee of the National Association of Trauma Centers and I am also a member of the Cleveland chapter of the Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice.

I have worked with hundreds of crime victims; people who have experienced a tremendous amount of trauma, often unexpectedly. My clients are hit with a rush of emotion as they grapple with the violence that entered their lives which often trigger prior unaddressed trauma. When people experience trauma, they can experience exaggerated startled response, PTSD, anxiety, depression, anxiety, loss of sleep, panic attacks, anger, hyper awareness, the desire to isolate, and sleep disturbance. Crime victims often describe feeling out of sorts. Crime victims often express feelings of guilt because they feel that they should have been able to do something to prevent their victimization, consequently they develop a distorted and negative view of themselves.

Given all the many ways that we respond to trauma it's no surprise that unaddressed trauma can lead to drug use. Many of the crime victims I work with have experienced prior trauma and received little to no support. Unaddressed trauma and addiction go hand in hand. Without the

proper support many crime victims do turn to substances to numb their symptoms of trauma and their pain.

Healing post-victimization is complex; barriers to support and services add to the complexities and further interfere with recovering after victimization.

Too many times I have been in the unfortunate situation of informing crime victims that they are ineligible for victims of crime compensation, a fund which assists with funeral, housing and loss of wages. I will have to deliver that devastating news more frequently due to on-going cuts.

Trauma Recovery Centers like mine that provide wrap-around support for underserved victims of crime are being hit hard; consequently crime victims are being denied much needed support in their time of need. Today our staff has been cut by 75% which limits the number of victims we can serve and the amount of services we can provide. I recently received a call from a victim who is unable to return home. She is a survivor of domestic violence, her abuser has not been arrested and has threatened to kill her. Domestic violence shelters are full. A homeless shelter is not an option due to the extent of her injuries. This woman needs to be discharged from the hospital but safe shelter and relocation resources are also limited. Other Trauma Recovery Centers around the state of Ohio have similar stories.

Crime victims often experience mental health challenges, substance abuse, housing instability, disruption in employment, re-victimization and contact with the justice system. By removing barriers to their healing journey and expanding support with much needed funding, we can help crime victims avoid these challenges.

Brenda Glass
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