



CREATION OF A CRIME VICTIM SERVICES ACCOUNT SB 6389

Substitute Senate Bill 6389

SB 6389

- Summary** SB 6389 would add \$10 to traffic infraction penalties. The funds would be deposited into the newly created Crime Victim Services Account. Funds in this account would be used to fund 1) Victim/Witness Units (victim services in prosecutors' offices), 2) Crime Victim Services.
- History** This bill comes from the victim services community as a proposed method of addressing the funding needs of crime victim services. While there has been a longstanding need to provide increased funding for crime victim services, the governor's proposed budget currently outlines a 20% cut to all of the above-mentioned victim services. A reduction of 20% to sexual assault funding equates to 3 million dollars. The Governor placed it 6th on her list of items to be restored with generated revenue. The creation of a crime victims services account can generate revenue to support and stabilize crime victim services.

Facts

- According to statistics from the FBI and the National Crime Victimization Survey, there are more than **500,000** new victims of crime in Washington *each year*.
- At current funding levels, we are only able to provide services to about 10% of **new** crime victims annually - this does not include ANY funding for crime victim services for those whose trials or recovery take longer than one year.
- Of the 10% of crime victims who are served annually, the state investment in crime victim services for these victims is about \$1 per day per victim at current funding levels.
- There are no offender-generated funds (including traffic infraction penalties) that currently support Crime Victim Service Centers in Washington.
- In Washington State, 38 percent of all women have been victims of sexual assault in their lifetimes. Of these, 80 percent were victimized before the age of 18 (OCVA, 2001).
- Sexual assault has an impact not just on victims, but also on their families, friends, and community.
- Investment in crime victim services is a cost effective and fiscally responsible approach.

Support SB 6389

- It is appropriate that those who present a public safety risk by voluntarily choosing to violate the laws of our state should make a contribution to society that helps restore the community.
- A \$10 fine on traffic infractions is an appropriate contribution proportionate to the crimes committed. For example, offenders convicted of felony crimes must pay a \$500 fine, one-third of which is used to support victim services in prosecutor's offices. The risk and harm that society sustains from traffic infractions is less than the risk and harm that society sustains from felony crimes. Thus, the fine is smaller and proportionate to the offense.
- This bill is an important step in stabilizing much needed funding for crime victims in Washington State.

PLEASE SUPPORT SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6389

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