



Legislation

SB 993 (Skinner)

Ending Unjust Barriers to Victim Compensation

While California's victim compensation program is in many ways a national leader, survivors entitled to compensation still face hurdles accessing it. Thousands of claims are denied each year. And, recent analyses have found that the types of compensation eligibility restrictions California has – including conviction-based restrictions, denials for alleged lack of cooperation, and restrictions based on alleged victim contribution to the victimization – contribute to inequitable rates of denials for our state's most vulnerable populations. Those survivors who do qualify must navigate overwhelming paperwork and restrictions that limit the kinds of resources they are eligible for. Many become so discouraged they opt out altogether. The program also moves slowly, but survivor needs are often urgent. It can take many months for survivors to get assistance from the compensation program. SB 993 will address these barriers to compensation, removing unjust eligibility restrictions and reducing red tape, so that survivors can get the help they need.

SB 1017 (Eggman)

Keeping Survivors Housed Act

SB 1017 will strengthen the current eviction protections survivors have under California law. Several gaps in the law leave survivors at risk and unable to access the existing protection. This bill will help ensure that no survivor can be evicted because of acts of abuse or violence committed against them. The bill will:

- Provide a pathway for survivors to stay in their homes, even if the person who caused harm is a tenant who is being evicted for a violent act against the survivor.
- Ensure protections are available to victims of any type of violence and their immediate family members.
- Expand the types of documentation survivors may use to access protections.
- Eliminate a loophole allowing survivors to be evicted if they "allow" the person who caused harm to visit the property.
- Create a way for survivors to take action if their rights to eviction protection or lease termination are violated.

AB 1949 (Low)

Bereavement Leave

All workers deserve the right to take time off to grieve the loss of a loved one. AB 1949 will allow workers to take unpaid bereavement leave when a close family member dies. Under current law, most workers in California have no right to bereavement leave — paid or unpaid — when a close family member dies. Thanks to legislation Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice sponsored in 2020, family members of homicide victims can take time off to access victim services or deal with legal issues. But employees who lose a family member — whether to homicide, illness, or any other reason — still do not have the right to take time off to make funeral arrangements or simply to grieve. AB 1949 would guarantee workers of employers with 5 or more employees can take at least 5-days of unpaid bereavement leave. It would also make sure that workers could use other available paid leave (sick, vacation, personal days) for bereavement.

SB 1268 (Caballero)

Curtis's Law

Will allow the immediate family of a deceased minor to inspect investigative information and records concerning the minor's death held by law enforcement agencies; require a law enforcement agency holding such records to notify the minors' parent or other relative of the existence of the records within a specified period; providing an effective date. Criminal investigative information and criminal intelligence information shall be made available for inspection by the immediate family members of a minor whose death is or has been investigated by a law enforcement agency.

SB 299 (Leyva)

Equal Access for Victims of Police Violence

SB 299 is critically important, as it ensures that more survivors receive the support needed to address their trauma, regardless of who caused that harm. Survivors of police violence and those who have lost a loved one to murder should not have to overcome unjust barriers to compensation. Ultimately, this bill will improve access to this crucial program for survivors. SB 299 Would do the Following:

- Recognize victims who are seriously injured or killed by police and their loved ones as victims eligible for compensation, regardless of whether the officer is charged.
- For victims of police violence and families of homicide victims, end compensation denials that blame the victim for their own injury or death in most cases.
- For victims of police violence and families of homicide victims, end denials based on noncooperation with law enforcement.

Budget

\$200 million in funding for critical victim services, including \$175 million for immediate relief for crime victims through trauma recovery services, civil legal services, and localized flexible cash assistance funds and \$25 million in flexible surge funding for victim services providers to expand programming in response to recent increases in violence across the state. While so many crime survivors want help, too few receive it. This is particularly true for victims from historically marginalized communities that face barriers to accessing existing state services. Funding should include:

- Grow funding for trauma recovery services, including adding Trauma Recovery Centers (TRC) in counties that do not have TRCs yet. Provide flexible funding for Community Based Organizations that serve survivors, and are rooted in communities of color most harmed by violence.
- Develop local immediate needs funds. The victim compensation program is critical, but not every survivor can access funds. The program also may not cover the full need, and is not designed to get funds to survivors quickly enough. Local immediate needs funds – ideally based in trusted community organizations – can complement this program.
- Fund civil legal services for survivors facing legal challenges relating to housing, employment, family law, and immigration issues, and debt following victimization.
- Provide flexible support to victim services providers across the state.

\$100 million per-year to fund the victim compensation program at the level of need, and end reliance on fees. Increasing the annual general fund appropriation to \$100 million per-year would permanently stabilize the restitution fund, and allow the state to remove eligibility barriers. It would also replace unstable fines and fees revenue with general fund revenue. This would allow the state to reduce fines and fees – which can trap people in the justice system in cycles of impossible debt, frustrating rehabilitation and safety goals.

Anthony DiMartino, MSW

Government Affairs Director
Californians for Safety and Justice
Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice
adimartino@safeandjust.org

Edward Little

CA Government Affairs Manager
Californians for Safety and Justice
Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice
elittle@safeandjust.org



CRIME SURVIVORS FOR
SAFETY AND JUSTICE

CSSJ.org