

## APPROVAL MEMORANDUM - No. 43 Chapter 695

MEMORANDUM filed with Senate Bill Number 214-A, entitled:

"AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to expanding eligibility for victims and survivors of crime to access victim compensation funds by removing the mandatory law enforcement reporting requirement, providing alternative forms of evidence that would show that a qualifying crime was committed and the confidentiality of certain records"

## APPROVED

Almost forty years ago, Congress established the Victims of Crime Act, which led to the creation of the New York State Office of Victim Services (OVS). OVS administers the Crime Victim's Fund, which compensates survivors for various costs associated with their experiences, such as hospital bills, burial expenses, or temporary housing. Too often, however, crime victims have been reluctant to seek compensation from OVS because of the requirement that they report their experiences to law enforcement; a reluctance that may be due to fear of retaliation, distrust, or the potential relationship dynamics between the victim and perpetrator. This bill broadens eligibility for victims and survivors of crime to access victim compensation funds by removing the requirement that they provide documentation of a report to law enforcement, and providing alternative forms of evidence that would show that a qualifying crime occurred.

I fully support the goals of this legislation, which aims to provide alternative ways for crime victims to substantiate their claims for expenses resulting from their victimization, creating more equitable access to victim compensation in New York State. To ensure OVS can responsibly and effectively administer the Crime Victim's Fund in an expanded capacity, certain technical amendments are needed, including requiring medical providers and victim services providers to attest to physical injuries of a claimant, and setting an effective date of December 31, 2025, to give OVS adequate time to prepare for the implementation of significant statutory changes.

I have reached an agreement with the Legislature to enact these changes. On the basis of this agreement, I am pleased to sign this bill.

This bill is approved.

(signed) KATHY HOCHUL