



CRIME SURVIVORS FOR SAFETY AND JUSTICE

June 26, 2019

Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Honorable Bill Galvano, President
The Florida Senate
404 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Honorable Jose R. Oliva, Speaker
Florida House of Representatives
420 The Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Governor DeSantis, Senate President Galvano and House Speaker Oliva:

We, the undersigned, are crime victims from across the state of Florida. We write to applaud the passage of HB 7125 and urge that it be signed into law. For too long, victims of crime have felt unheard in the legislative process. With the passage of HB 7125, we feel our voices and vision for public safety are beginning to be heard.

HB 7125 takes the right approach to public safety. It provides support for crime victims and our families to recover by removing barriers to accessing the victim compensation program.

There is no more important role of our justice system than protecting victims of crime and facilitating their recovery. Yet most victims in our state indicate that the justice system provides little support in their time of need. Only 16 percent of Florida crime victims felt very supported by the criminal justice system, according to a 2018 survey.

Many victims in communities most harmed by crime often don't know about the victim compensation program or are not in any condition to apply at the time the crime occurs. Deadlines may have passed by the time people become aware of the program or are ready to apply. This extension of the time limit to apply for victim compensation to 3 years will make an important difference for victims of crime in Florida.

At the same time, HB 7125 advances smart safety policies by removing barriers that prevent people from turning their lives around, providing effective rehabilitation that stops the cycle of crime, and enacting balanced solutions to public safety. It ensures people can successfully re-enter communities by getting back to work, providing important pathways forward for those with a past conviction to access occupational licenses and earn stability in their lives. HB 7125 also increases the use of non-prison

sanctions to respond to technical violations of probation, something that is more effective at changing the underlying behavior and rehabilitation. These changes are critical to reducing the likelihood that people re-offend, thus improving safety for all Floridians.

HB 7125 focuses serious public safety resources where they are needed most, away from those who cause the least harm and towards what makes us safe. We thank the Florida legislature for listening to crime victims and making crucial changes to our public safety system to ensure that survivors have more resources to heal and we stop the cycle of harm and trauma.

These important reforms passed by the state legislature should be made law in our state. We look forward to continuing to work with state leaders to ensure that the needs of crime victims are met and true safety solutions for our communities are advanced.

The measures contained in HB 7125 represent a new start towards making our state a more safe and just place for all of us. We look forward to standing with you when you sign this bill and take our state one monumental step in the right direction on criminal justice reform

Sincerely,

Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice Florida Leadership

1. Diane Hankins, ***Dade City Chapter Co-Coordinator***
2. Margarita Romo, ***Dade City Chapter Co-Coordinator***
3. Feletta Smith, ***Jacksonville Chapter Coordinator***
4. Trenise Bryant, ***Miami Chapter Co-Coordinator***
5. Megan Hobson, ***Miami Chapter Co-Coordinator***
6. Joel Junior Morales, ***Orlando Chapter Coordinator***
7. Calvin Brown, ***St. Petersburg Chapter Co-Coordinator***
8. LaDonna Butler, ***St. Petersburg Chapter Co-Coordinator***
9. Agnes Furey, ***Tallahassee Chapter Co-Coordinator***
10. Doris Strong, ***Tallahassee Chapter Co-Coordinator***
11. Darla Saunders, ***Tampa Chapter Co-Coordinator***
12. Elliott Saunders, ***Tampa Chapter Co-Coordinator***

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