



## SENATE OF PENNSYLVANIA BILL SUMMARY

### Senate Bill 260 Printer's No. 240

Prime Sponsor: Senator Ward  
Committee: Judiciary

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#### **SYNOPSIS:**

This bill amends the Crime Victims Act to add members to the Victim Services' Advisory Committee and make technical changes.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The Crime Victims Act established the Victim Services Advisory Committee ("VSAC") within the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. The VSAC meets no fewer than four times per year. The VSAC serves in an advisory capacity to the Commission and assists the Commission's Office of Victim Services to develop a plan relating to victims' services and compensation. The VSAC advises the Commission on the development and correlation of programs and projects. It develops standards for evaluating and monitoring direct victims' services.

Under current law, the VSAC is comprised of the Secretaries of Aging, Corrections, and Public Welfare, or their designees, and the Commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police. This bill changes "Public Welfare" to "Human Services" and allows the State Police Commissioner to send a designee to VSAC meetings.

Under current law, the Victim Advocate and a district attorney appointed by the Governor are members of the VSAC. This bill does not change those provisions.

Current law requires the Governor to appoint nine members of the VSAC from generally prescribed classes. These include statewide victims' coalitions, prosecution-based victim/witness programs, the courts, members of local government, and victim-services agencies that work with children. This bill adds to the general classes certain specific members of the VSAC as follows:

- A direct victim of crime representing female victims
- A direct victim of crime representing male victims
- An area agency on aging
- The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

- The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape
- The Pennsylvania Chapter of Children's Advocacy Centers and Multidisciplinary Teams
- The Pennsylvania Court Appointed Special Advocates Association
- A county children and youth agency
- A prosecution-based victim witness program
- A victims' service or advocacy organization
- The courts
- County government
- The executive director of the Juvenile Court Judges Commission
- A children's advocacy center or victims' services agency working directly with children
- Local law enforcement
- A mental health treatment provider
- A victims' services agency working directly with victims of human trafficking

Finally, the bill requires that two residents of the Commonwealth be appointed to the VSAC by the chairman of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. The agency heads and Victim Advocate serve ex officio, while the remaining members of the VSAC serve four-year terms and may be re-appointed for no more than one consecutive term.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:**

This bill is effective in 60 days.

**BILL HISTORY:**

None.

Prepared by: Cawley 3/17/2017