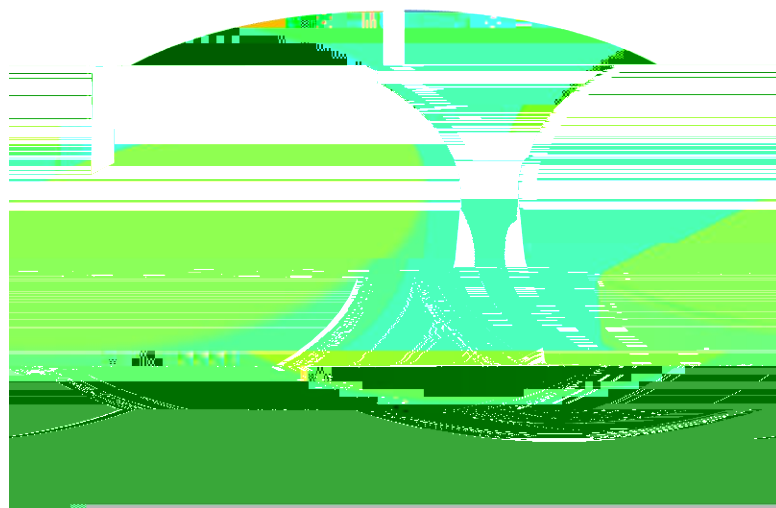


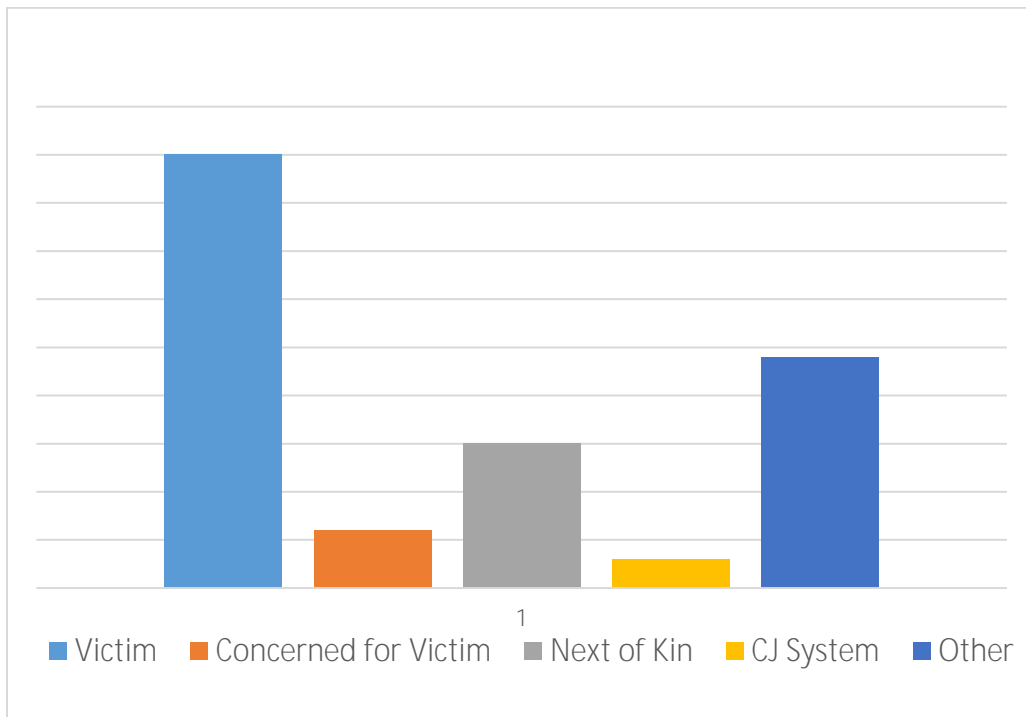
S.C. Code Section 16-3-1620(B)

1. Refer crime victims to the appropriate element of the criminal and juvenile justice systems or victim assistance programs, when services are requested by crime victims or are necessary as determined by the Ombudsman;
2. Act as a liaison between elements of the criminal and juvenile justice systems, victim assistance programs, and victims when the need for liaison services is recognized by the Ombudsman;
3. Review and attempt to resolve complaints against elements of the criminal and juvenile justice systems or victim assistance programs, made to the Ombudsman by victims of criminal activity within the state's jurisdiction.





We serve as a hub of information in the State to help anyone find crime victim assistance. Much of our work involves educating callers about resources available in their own communities, and how they can help. We connect victims to the expert Victim Service Providers working in law enforcement agencies, Solicitors' Offices, courts, detention centers/jails, state agencies and in non-profit organizations to ensure their needs are rapidly and effectively met.



A caller's elderly father was allegedly being abused in a nursing home.

A LEVA needed resources for aging victims.

The parent of a gunshot victim was upset that an offender was released on bond.

A caller says he was arrested for being mentally ill. Is that legal?

A caller's parent was in nursing home but wanted to bring him home. Is that allowed?

A laptop was stolen at hospital; security would not take a report.

An advocate needed information about "signs of batterers" and information about attorneys to help low-income victims.

Despite reporting numerous harassment incidents involving ex-spouse / DV offender, a caller still felt unsafe.

A caller believed their son was murdered and requested additional police agencies to investigate.

A caller was concerned for a friend whose grandson was missing and complained that Police would not allow a private search company to consult with them.

A caller was upset that judges were releasing repeat offender from jail because of COVID.

A caller was concerned that their complaint to the county council was leaked to an opposing political

An assault victim's relative has questions about what to expect in court tomorrow.

A funeral home inquired about financial assistance available for a victim of hit-and-run.

A caller needed help with trauma and relocation to a safe place

Crime victims call us when they believe something has gone wrong in their cases. When victims call with concerns, we serve as a neutral third-party to help them understand the issues and work towards a solution.

Handling any issue in the form of an "Assist" allows us to conduct an inquiry without

The list below contains the presenting allegations CVO received from people seeking help

A survivor of stalking was not notified of a probation violation hearing and was unable to request Permanent Restraining Order.

A man called us to say his wife was raped by man currently in a Georgia prison. The rapist kept writing her letters from prison and he wanted to know how to stop him.

A number of victims reported offenders not paying restitution and about the court's inability to hold offenders accountable for disobeying legal directives.

Numerous survivors of domestic violence requested our help to have their offenders' "no contact" orders lifted and criminal charges dismissed. (Note: CVO confers with survivors about other strategies to find resources / remain safe and encourages them to contact local domestic violence agencies for further help.)

A survivor of stalking called seeking advice about whether or not to report crimes.

A victim of an aggravated assault was not notified when the offender was released from jail.

A caller was unhappy with an investigation into a fatal car wreck and lack of charges.

Numerous callers were upset that their offender had not yet been arrested.

Family court was shut down and a victim needed to immediately file for an Order of Protection.

After a car crash, a firearm was taken by police for safety and caller needed help to have it returned.

A caller was assaulted by a coworker. They did not receive information about victims' rights and a Judge did not allow them to be present or speak during a virtual bond hearing.

A caller wanted a different police agency to investigate their case due to a perceived conflict of interest.

A caller said that a local Sheriff's Office gave them cancer.

An attorney for a victim of human trafficking was concerned that ICE agents refused to allow them to attend a 'forensic' interview with a client.

A caller was upset at a 'stand your ground' ruling on their brother's shooting death.

A person claimed that their neighbor was cyber attacking them through the TV and phone.

A caller wanted their neighbor arrested for trespassing on their side of a shared roof.

A person complained that law enforcement was lying about them, which resulted in a conviction for dealing meth.

A caller complained law enforcement and private investigators were stalking them.

An attorney for a victim of a hit-and-run wanted bodycam footage before the criminal case is disposed of. Would victims' rights attach on a hit and run?



It is an honor to assist our colleagues in the criminal justice / victim service community by providing information, advice, research and technical assistance. We also help mediate issues between coworkers or agencies to improve collaboration in providing services to victims. If you need help or answers to any of the questions listed below, please call us!

The father of murdered woman did not want her mother to have any information about case progress from police because her parental rights had been terminated years prior.

Judges are asking police

A drunk driver crashed into man's business and rental properties. Are there resources available for this victim?

An offender violated an Order of Protection three times and was

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Our online complaint process allows anyone to submit a Formal Complaint. The complaints that do not allege a person is dealing with a criminal matter is designated as "other." In carrying out the inquiry, we request information and documents from the agencies to help us make a decision whether or not the entity violated the victim's legal rights. This decision is called a "Disposition."

The vast majority of complaints CVO receives are deemed "Unfounded" since many crime victims do not clearly understand the duties or responsibilities an agency has to them. For example, we regularly hear from crime victims who believe an offender should serve more jail time than they received. We explain that that it is the proper role of the judge to determine sentencing, and that ne



_____. Arrest or detention of person accused of committing offense; notification to victims; protection of witnesses; notification of bond proceedings; juvenile detention hearings.

(A) A law enforcement agency

victims, the deprivation of a right exacerbates the feelings of helplessness he or she already feels as a result of the crime. It is in the best interest of the victim and the overall justice system that public officials make sincere and meaningful efforts to comply with their constitutional and statutory duties to victims of crime.

CVO then contacted the South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) and received a copy of the original "Jail Time Report" they received from the County Jail.

It took us 6 days to fix this problem. The Jail Time Report incorrectly reflected that the offender

Established in 1994 by S.C. Code §§16-3-1620-1690, the Office of the Crime Victim Ombudsman is statutorily defined:

Definitions.

As used in this article:

- (1) "Criminal and juvenile justice system" means circuit solicitors and members of their staffs; the Attorney General and his staff; law enforcement agencies and officers; adult and juvenile probation, parole, and correctional agencies and officers; officials responsible for victims' compensation and other services which benefit victims of crime, and state, county, and

writing to the complainant and the persons or agencies that are the object of the complaint and recommendations that in the ombudsman's opinion will assist all parties. The persons or agencies that are the subject of the complaint shall respond, within a reasonable time, to the ombudsman regarding actions taken, if any, as a result of the ombudsman's report and recommendations.

The ombudsman shall prepare a public annual report, not identifying individual agencies or individuals, summarizing his activity. The annual report must be submitted directly to the Governor, General Assembly, elements of the criminal and juvenile justice systems, and victim assistance programs.

_____. Confidentiality of information and files.

Information and files requested and received by the ombudsman are confidential and retain their confidential status at all times. Juvenile records obtained under this section may be released only in accordance with provisions of the Children's Code.

_____. Cooperation with the criminal and juvenile justice systems and victim assistance programs.

All elements of the criminal and juvenile justice systems and victim assistance programs shall cooperate with the ombudsman in carrying out the duties described in Sections 16-3-1620 and 16-3-1630.

_____. Grounds for dismissal.

A victim's exercise of rights granted by this article is not grounds for dismissing a criminal proceeding or setting aside a conviction or sentence.

_____. Purpose.

of mandamus, to be issued by any justice of the Supreme Court or circuit court judge to require compliance by any public employee, public agency, the State, or any agency responsible for the enforcement of the rights and provisions of these services contained in this section, and a willful failure to comply with a writ of mandamus is punishable as contempt.

(C) For purposes of this section:

(1) A victim's exercise of any right granted by this section is not grounds for dismissing any criminal proceeding or setting aside any conviction or sentence.

(2) "Victim" means a person who suffers direct or threatened physical, psychological, or financial harm as the result of the commission or attempted commission of a crime against him. The term "victim" also includes the person's spouse, parent, child, or lawful representative of a crime victim who is deceased, who is a minor or who is incompetent or who was a homicide victim or who is physically or psychologically incapacitated.

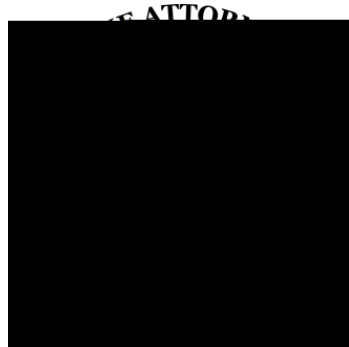
(3) The General Assembly has the authority to enact substantive and procedural laws to define, implement, preserve, and protect the rights guaranteed to victims by this section, including the authority to extend any of these rights to juvenile proceedings.

(4) The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights for victims shall not be construed to deny or disparage others granted by the General Assembly or retained by victims.

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"FOR TOO LONG, THE VICTIMS HAVE
BEEN THE FORGOTTEN PERSONS OF



Attorney General Alan M. Wilson
State of South Carolina

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