

# CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT ARTICLE XXIX – RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF CRIME

In all criminal prosecutions, a victim, as the general assembly may define by law, shall have the following rights:

1. The right to be treated with fairness and respect throughout the criminal justice process;
2. The right to timely disposition of the case following arrest of the accused, provided no right of the accused is abridged;
3. The right to be reasonably protected from the accused throughout the criminal justice process;
4. The right to notification of court proceedings;
5. The right to attend the trial and all other court proceedings the accused has the right to attend, unless such person is to testify and the court determines that such person's testimony would be materially affected if such person hears other testimony;
6. The right to communicate with the prosecution;
7. The right to object to or support any plea agreement entered into by the accused and the prosecution and to make a statement to the court prior to the acceptance by the court of the plea of guilty or *nolo contendere* by the accused;
8. The right to make a statement to the court at sentencing;
9. The right to restitution which shall be enforceable in the same manner as any other cause of action or as otherwise provided by law; and
10. The right to information about the arrest, conviction, sentence, imprisonment and release of the accused.

The general assembly shall provide by law for the enforcement of this subsection. Nothing in this subsection or in any law enacted pursuant to this subsection shall be construed as creating a basis for vacating a conviction or ground for appellate relief in any criminal case.

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Office of Victim Services  
Toll-free (CT only): 1-800-822-8428  
Services: 860-263-2760

## VICTIM SERVICES ADVOCATES



OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES  
*Focusing on a brighter future*

*OVS Victim Services Advocates help crime victims with criminal justice proceedings. Advocates inform crime victims of their rights and refer them to resources that may reduce the effects of trauma associated with crime.*

#### OVS ADVOCATES PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT:

- Criminal justice system
- Victim rights
- Specific case updates
- Victim compensation

#### OVS ADVOCATES MAY ASSIST VICTIMS BY:

- Providing them with an escort to court
- Advocating for them during court proceedings
- Notifying them of their rights

#### OVS ADVOCATES MAY HELP WITH:

- Getting property back
- Obtaining restitution
- Referring to social services
- Preparing a victim impact statement

#### TALKING WITH PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM

The State's Attorney, also known as the prosecutor, represents the interests of the State. Because the victim is often the primary witness for the prosecutor's case, the prosecutor may want to speak with the victim. The OVS advocate may arrange that meeting and may accompany the victim to the meeting. By law, victims have the right to speak with the prosecutor.

Investigators and inspectors who work for the State's Attorney's office may need to contact or interview the crime victim.

A victim has no obligation to talk to the defendant, defense counsel, or defense investigators. If the victim is contacted by someone who wishes to discuss the case, the victim should ask them for their name and where they work. With that information, the victim may be better able to decide whether to answer questions about the case.

Victims and family members have no obligation to communicate with media representatives.

Please call the court-based victim services advocate or OVS (**1-800-822-8428**) if you have questions.

#### GUIDELINES FOR COURT TESTIMONY

If a case goes to trial, the victim will likely be asked to testify. Here are some helpful tips if called to testify:

- Be prepared to wait
- Keep calm
- Always tell the truth
- Stop speaking when someone says "objection"
- If a question is unclear, say so
- Do not volunteer extra information
- Speak clearly and loudly for all jurors to hear
- Dress neatly
- Be polite

#### GUIDELINES FOR VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENTS

Crime victims have the right to be heard by the criminal justice system at the time of sentencing. By presenting a victim impact statement, which describes how the victim or the victim's loved ones have been affected by the crime, the victim provides valuable input into how the court can best hold the offender accountable.

Here are some areas to address in the victim impact statement:

- The physical, emotional, and financial effects of the crime
- Any concerns you may have about your safety
- Any changes in your life you may have experienced since the crime
- What you want to see happen now

OVS victim services advocates are available to answer questions regarding your victim impact statement. Call **1-800-822-8428** for information.