



# Lieutenant Governor Austin A. Davis

**To:** Michael Pennington, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Kathy Buckley, Director of the Office of Victims' Services, John P. Delaney, Jr. Esq. Chair of the Victims Services Advisory Committee and Deborah Shoemaker, Vice-Chair of the Victims Services Advisory Committee

**From:** Chairman of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Lieutenant Governor Austin A. Davis

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Austin A. Davis".

**Re:** Resources for Victims of Gun Violence Initiative - Victims Services Advisory Committee

**Date:** June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023

The following memo outlines a formal request by the Chairman of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) to the Victims Services Advisory Committee (VSAC) within PCCD to gather and disseminate information about the resources, programs and benefits that help victims of gun violence in Pennsylvania.

Recognizing that VSAC is structured similarly to the Council proposed within the Resources for Victims of Gun Violence Act, as introduced by Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) and Representative Dwight Evans (D-PA-3), it is the request of the Lt. Governor as Chairman of PCCD for VSAC to pursue the report language of the Resources for Victims of Gun Violence Act.

Please note the legislation and the request by the PCCD Chairman to VSAC is supported by March for Our Lives, Brady, Everytown for Gun Safety, Newtown Action Alliance, Jr. Newtown Action Alliance, CeaseFirePA, the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and Survivors Empowered.

VSAC is requested to survey victims of gun violence and victim assistance professionals; conduct literature review and assess past or ongoing programs designed to assist victims of gun violence or individuals with similar needs to determine the effectiveness of programs; best and promising practices for assisting victims of gun violence; and assess the administration of compensation funds to determine best and promising practices to direct victims of gun violence to sources of funding.

"Victim" shall be defined as an individual who has been wounded as a result of gun violence; an individual who has been threatened as act of gun violence; an individual who has witnessed an act of gun violence; a relative, classmate, coworker, or other associate of an individual who has been killed as a result of gun violence; a relative, classmate, coworker, or other associate of an individual who has been threatened with an act of gun violence; a relative, classmate, coworker, or other associate of an individual who has witnessed an act of gun violence.

VSAC shall identify, promote, coordinate, and disseminate to the public information, resources, and best and promising practices available to help victims of gun violence meet their medical and health insurance, financial educational, food supports, workplace, housing, transportation, assistive technology, and accessibility needs;

maintain their health and emotional well-being; seek legal redress for their injuries and protection against any ongoing threats to their safety; and access government programs, services, and benefits for which they may be eligible or to which they may be entitled.

VSAC, in collaboration with the Commission's other Advisory Committees, shall establish a process to collect input to inform the development of, and provide updates to, the best and promising practices, resources, and other information. The outreach shall be to entities and individuals that have a range of experience with gun violence; and include representation from communities disproportionately affected by gun violence. Those entities and individuals shall include the following:

- A. Local governments;
- B. Organizations that provide information to, or support for victims of gun violence;
- C. Victims of gun violence; and
- D. Victim assistance professionals.

VSAC shall ask for input on information, resources, and best and promising practices available, including identification of any gaps and unmet needs; recommendations that would help victims of gun violence do the following:

- A. Better meet their medical and health insurance, financial, educational, food supports, workplace, housing, transportation, assistive technology, and accessibility needs;
- B. Maintain their mental health and emotional well-being;
- C. Seek legal redress for their injuries and protection against any ongoing threats to their safety; and
- D. Access government programs, services, and benefits for which the victims may be eligible or to which the victims may be entitled; and
- E. Any other subject areas discovered during the process that would help victims of gun violence.

Upon the availability of federal Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program funding and not later than 365 days after the request is made to VSAC by the PCCD Chairman, VSAC shall prepare a report that includes the best and promising practices, resources, and other useful information for victims of gun violence identified above, as well as the website and telephone contact information for helplines of relevant Federal agencies, State agencies and nonprofit organizations. The report shall also identify gaps in the aforementioned items and any Federal or State legislative or executive authority necessary to address the identified gaps. VSAC shall also provide interim reports on identified gaps to PCCD's Chairman and the Secretary of Policy and Planning or their designees during the project period.

VSAC shall make this report available through PCCD's public website; and submit a hardcopy to the following:

- A. The Governor;
- B. The Lieutenant Governor;
- C. The Attorney General
- D. The Secretary of Health;
- E. The Speaker of House;
- F. House Majority Leadership
- G. House Minority Leadership;
- H. Senate Majority Leadership; and
- I. Senate Minority Leadership