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H.541

Introduced by Representatives Dolan of Essex, Black of Essex, Bluemle of
Burlington, Christie of Hartford, Coffey of Guilford, Notte of
Rutland City, and Vyhovsky of Essex

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Criminal procedures; Center for Crime Victims Services

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to direct the
Center for Crime Victims Services to establish the Victims Services Advisory
Council to bring service providers, crime victims, and survivors together to
improve public policy for and optimize the provision of services to victims and
survivors of crime.

An act relating to establishing the Victims Services Advisory Council
within the Center for Crime Victims Services

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 13 V.S.A. § 5361 is amended to read:

§ 5361. CENTER FOR CRIME VICTIM SERVICES

(a) The Center for Crime Victim Services is created and shall be
responsible for the following:

(1) strengthen and coordinate programs serving crime victims;

1 (2) promote the rights and needs of crime victims statewide;

2 (3) [Repealed.]

3 (4) assist in the development and administration of other programs and
4 services for crime victims and witnesses, as needed;

5 (5) administer the federal Victims of Crime Act funds (VOCA); and

6 (6) serve as a clearinghouse for information regarding victims of crime.

7 (b)(1) The Center shall convene and regularly consult with the Victims
8 Services Advisory Council in order to bring service providers, crime victims,
9 and survivors together to improve public policy for and optimize the provision
10 of services to victims and survivors of crime. The Advisory Council shall
11 include:

12 (A) the Executive Director of the Vermont Network or designee;

13 (B) the State's Attorney Victim Advocate Coordinator or designee;

14 (C) the Director of the Department of Corrections Victim Services
15 Program or designee;

16 (D) the Vermont State Police Victims Services Director or designee;

17 (E) a representative of the Special Investigative Units, appointed by
18 the Executive Director of the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs;

19 (F) a representative of a Community Justice Center, appointed by the
20 Department of Corrections;

1 (G) a diversion program representative, appointed by the Office of
2 the Attorney General;

3 (H) the victim advocate in the Office of the Attorney General or
4 designee;

5 (I) the victim advocate in the United States Attorney's Office for the
6 District of Vermont or designee;

7 (J) a director of a community-based domestic and sexual violence
8 program, appointed by the Vermont Network;

9 (K) two persons who are victims or survivors of crime, appointed by
10 the Executive Director of the Center; and

11 (L) any other person who the Center determines would be of
12 assistance.

13 (2) The Advisory Council shall:

14 (A) facilitate opportunities for dialogue, advocacy, education, and
15 support among State agencies, advocacy groups, and the public;

16 (B) recommend changes in State programs, laws, administrative
17 regulations, policies, and budgets related to victims and survivors of crime;

18 (C) serve as a clearinghouse for stakeholders with respect to policies
19 and practices impacting crime victims and survivors;

1 (D) identify ways to engage victim and survivor voices and support
2 and collaborate with victims and survivors to promote opportunities for their
3 voices to be heard;

4 (E) identify strategies to ensure that the delivery of services to
5 victims and survivors is trauma informed;

6 (F) identify training needs for service providers and collaborate to
7 provide opportunities to meet those needs;

8 (G) ensure the promotion and coordination of best practices for
9 working with victims and survivors; and

10 (H) perform such other duties as the Center determines would be of
11 assistance to victims and survivors.

12 (c) The Center shall be governed by and attached to the Victims
13 Compensation Board for administrative support.

14 ~~(e)~~(d) The Board may employ such staff as necessary to carry out its
15 responsibilities under this chapter and chapter 165 of this title.

16 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

17 This act shall take effect on passage.