

Senate Government Operations Committee
S.17 Sheriffs Reforms
Jennifer Poehlmann, Executive Director
March 17, 2023

Thank you for inviting me to testify on S.17. I am here to address the issue of victims being charged for standby services.

The Center supports the language that is in the most recent draft of S.17. Victims/citizens should not be held responsible for paying sheriffs for basic public safety functions. From a policy perspective, we think the language in the bill achieves this goal.

Public Policy

Standby services are incredibly important safety functions for people impacted by domestic violence. No victim should have to directly pay a sheriff - or any other law enforcement officer - for protecting and serving them in Vermont.

Budget

If the Sheriffs need financial assistance for standbys, or any other public safety function, we view that as a separate fiscal issue which should be addressed with all other fiscal matters related to their budgets.

Center for Crime Victim Services

The Center would also like to clear up some misinformation that has been provided to this Committee about the Center's ability to pay sheriffs for standbys. The Center does not have funding to pay Sheriffs for this service. These cases are not eligible for support from the Victims Compensation Fund. The Center must abide by federal regulations, and no other Compensation Program in the country provides victim's compensation in civil cases. In fact, we could jeopardize federal funding if we were to do so. The Center has attempted to make this clear more than once to the sheriffs and others.

Thank you very much for considering this very important public policy and for supporting victims of domestic violence when they are at their most vulnerable.





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