

## **Highlighted Improvements to Victims' Rights in Juvenile Proceedings through Act 160**

Act 160 (S.224), an act related to juvenile proceedings, was enacted on June 1, 2022.

The Act enhanced the rights of victims in juvenile and youthful offender proceeding in several key ways:

- Access to compensation funds and restitution regardless of sealing of a record (33 VSA §5119(i), 33 VSA §5235(k));
- Notification of all court proceedings and upon release of a juvenile from custody back into the community (33 VSA §5324, §5234a & §5288(YO));
- Access to all court proceedings (33 VSA §5234(a)(3) & §5288(YO));
- Established a victim's right to a victim advocate to be present in the court room with, and in support of, the victim (33 VSA §5127);
- Information that a victim can receive from a law enforcement agency upon initial investigation is expanded, including the identity of the juvenile and information about the court process and their rights within it, in addition to notification of conditions of release (33 VSA §5126 & §5288(YO)); and
- Clarifies a victim's right to share their "lived experience", without fear of consequences (33 VSA §5110(c) & §5288(YO)).

\*Some distinctions exist based upon whether the underlying charge is a listed or non-listed crime as defined in 13 VSA §5301(7)

