

HB228: Facilitating Access to Aid After Assault

Crime Victim Reparations Amendments



Why does the state provide reparations to survivors of rape, sexual assault, and strangulation? It does so to **help them heal and recover**, not just because they reported their experiences to police or cooperated with an investigation. This is especially important because the treatment of victims of sex crimes in the justice system is often poor, and

perpetrators of such crimes are charged infrequently and convicted even less often.

The current law leaves a **large portion of this vulnerable population helpless** if they are unwilling to trust and rely on a system that often increases the trauma they have suffered, rather than providing them with justice and protection. Furthermore, studies show that the faster and better a victim is supported and cared for, the better witnesses they make and the more willing they are to report and participate.

HB228 would solve this problem. It allows survivors of sexual assault and strangulation to **receive state aid if they seek help from state-certified victim advocates**, not just if they go to the police. Allowing these people to seek the best care they can so they can successfully recover and return to society is critical for their wellbeing, and also **increases the likelihood that they will cooperate with police.**

Why is strangulation included here? As Casey Gwinn, co-founder of the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention, said, “A woman who has suffered a **nonfatal strangulation incident** with her intimate partner is **750% more likely to be killed by the same perpetrator...with a gun.** That is a staggering number, and **it’s not a coincidence.** Researchers and law enforcement professionals have determined that **nonfatal strangulation is a leading indicator of escalating violence** in a relationship and an important risk factor for homicide in women.”