

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. Victims of sex crimes are often hesitant to report and assist in the prosecution of the crimes for fear of

reprisal. This bill helps them heal and be more likely to assist in the administration of criminal justice.

The current law leaves a **large portion of this vulnerable population helpless** and fearful of cooperating with criminal prosecution inasmuch as it often increases the trauma. 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."



Supporting this Bill:

Law Enforcement

Statewide Association of Prosecutors

Utah Forensic Nurse Examiners

CCJJ

Utah Council on Victims of Crime

Utah Domestic Violence Coalition

Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Utah Department of Health

Utah Crime Victim Reparations and Assistance Board

Intermountain Healthcare

