

1 AN ACT relating to crime victims' rights.

2 ***Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:***

3 ➔Section 1. KRS 421.576 is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

- 4 (1) In order to establish the minimum conduct of criminal justice professionals with  
5 respect to crime victims and to communicate the intent of the General Assembly  
6 that victims of crime play an integral role in the criminal justice process, KRS  
7 421.500 to 421.575 is hereby named the Kentucky Crime Victim Bill of Rights.
- 8 (2) The rights established by KRS 421.500 to 421.575 shall apply in all felony and  
9 misdemeanor proceedings in a District or Circuit Court of the Commonwealth.
- 10 (3) Nothing in KRS 421.500 to 421.575 shall provide grounds for the victim to  
11 challenge a charging decision or a conviction, to obtain a stay of trial, or to compel  
12 a new trial. Law enforcement agencies, county attorneys, and Commonwealth's  
13 attorneys and courts shall make every reasonable effort to ensure that victims of  
14 crime receive the benefits of the rights set out in KRS 421.500 to 421.575.

15 ➔Section 2. KRS 421.500 is repealed, reenacted, and amended to read as follows:

- 16 (1) (a) As used in KRS 421.500 to 421.575, "victim" means ***an individual directly***  
17 ***and proximately harmed as a result of:***

- 18 ***1. The commission of a crime classified as a felony; a misdemeanor***  
19 ***involving threatened or actual physical injury, harassment, or***  
20 ***restraint; a misdemeanor involving a child or incompetent person; or***  
21 ***a misdemeanor involving a sexual offense or a trespass; or***
- 22 ***2. Conduct which, if committed by an adult, would be classified as a***  
23 ***felony or a misdemeanor described in subparagraph 1. of this***  
24 ***paragraph.***

25 ***If the victim is a minor, incapacitated, or deceased, "victim" also means***  
26 ***one (1) or more of the victim's spouse, parents, siblings, children, or other***  
27 ***lawful representatives which shall be designated by the court unless the***

1 person is the defendant or a person the court finds would not act in the best  
2 interests of the victim.

3 (b) In a case in which the number of victims makes it impracticable to accord  
4 all victims those rights provided by KRS 421.500 to 421.575, the court may  
5 fashion a reasonable procedure that does not unduly complicate or prolong  
6 the proceeding, to give effect to this section.

7 (c) [an individual who suffers direct or threatened physical, financial, or  
8 emotional harm as a result of the commission of a crime classified as stalking,  
9 unlawful imprisonment, use of a minor in a sexual performance, unlawful  
10 transaction with a minor in the first degree, terroristic threatening, menacing,  
11 harassing communications, intimidating a witness, criminal homicide,  
12 robbery, rape, assault, sodomy, kidnapping, burglary in the first or second  
13 degree, sexual abuse, wanton endangerment, criminal abuse, human  
14 trafficking, or incest. If the victim is a minor or legally incapacitated, "victim"  
15 means a parent, guardian, custodian or court appointed special advocate.

16 (a) If the victim is deceased and the relation is not the defendant, the following  
17 relations shall be designated as "victim" for the purpose of exercising those  
18 rights contained in KRS 421.500 to 421.575:

- 19 1. The spouse;  
20 2. An adult child if subparagraph 1. of this paragraph does not apply;  
21 3. A parent if subparagraphs 1. and 2. of this paragraph do not apply;  
22 4. A sibling if subparagraphs 1. to 3. of this paragraph do not apply; and  
23 5. A grandparent if subparagraphs 1. to 4. do not apply.

24 (b) If the victim is deceased and the relation is not the defendant, the following  
25 relations shall be designated as "victims" for the purpose of presenting victim  
26 impact testimony under KRS 532.055(2)(a)7.:

- 27 1. A spouse;

- 1           2.    An adult child;
- 2           3.    A parent;
- 3           4.    A sibling; and
- 4           5.    A grandparent.

5   (2)   If any court believes that the health, safety, or welfare of a victim who is a minor or  
6       is legally incapacitated would not otherwise adequately be protected, the court may  
7       appoint a special advocate to represent the interest of the victim and to exercise  
8       those rights provided for by KRS 421.500 to 421.575. Communication between the  
9       victim and the special advocate shall be privileged.

10   (3)   Law enforcement personnel shall ensure that victims receive information on  
11       available protective, emergency, social, and medical services upon initial contact  
12       with the victim and are given information on the following as soon as possible:

- 13       (a)   Availability of crime victim compensation where applicable;
- 14       (b)   Community- based treatment programs;
- 15       (c)   The criminal justice process as it involves the participation of the victim or  
16           witness;
- 17       (d)   The arrest of the accused; and
- 18       (e)   How to register to be notified when a person has been released from prison,  
19           jail, a juvenile detention facility, or a psychiatric facility or forensic  
20           psychiatric facility if the case involves a violent crime as defined in KRS  
21           439.3401 and the person charged with or convicted of the offense has been  
22           involuntarily hospitalized pursuant to KRS Chapter 202A.

23   (4)   Law enforcement officers and attorneys for the Commonwealth shall provide  
24       information to victims and witnesses on how they may be protected from  
25       intimidation, harassment, and retaliation as defined in KRS 524.040 or 524.055.

26   (5)   Attorneys for the Commonwealth shall make a reasonable effort to insure that:

- 27       (a)   All victims and witnesses who are required to attend criminal justice

1 proceedings are notified promptly of any scheduling changes that affect their  
2 appearances;

3 (b) If victims so desire and if they provide the attorney for the Commonwealth  
4 with a current address and telephone number, they shall receive prompt  
5 notification, if possible, of judicial proceedings relating to their case,  
6 including but not limited to the defendant's release on bond and any special  
7 conditions of release; of the charges against the defendant, the defendant's  
8 pleading to the charges, and the date set for the trial; of notification of changes  
9 in the custody of the defendant and changes in trial dates; of the verdict, the  
10 victim's right to make an impact statement for consideration by the court at the  
11 time of sentencing of the defendant, the date of sentencing, the victim's right  
12 to receive notice of any parole board hearing held for the defendant, and that  
13 the office of Attorney General will notify the victim if an appeal of the  
14 conviction is pursued by the defendant; and of a scheduled hearing for shock  
15 probation or for bail pending appeal and any orders resulting from that  
16 hearing;

17 (c) The victim knows how to register to be notified when a person has been  
18 released from a prison, jail, a juvenile detention facility, or a psychiatric  
19 facility or forensic psychiatric facility if the case involves a violent crime as  
20 defined in KRS 439.3401 and the person charged with or convicted of the  
21 offense has been involuntarily hospitalized pursuant to KRS Chapter 202A;

22 (d) The victim receives information on available:

- 23 1. Protective, emergency, social, and medical services;
- 24 2. Crime victim compensation, where applicable;
- 25 3. Restitution, where applicable;
- 26 4. Assistance from a victim advocate; and
- 27 5. Community-based treatment programs; and

- 1 (e) The victim of crime may, pursuant to KRS 15.247, receive protection from  
2 harm and threats of harm arising out of cooperation with law enforcement and  
3 prosecution efforts.
- 4 (6) The victim shall be consulted by the attorney for the Commonwealth on the  
5 disposition of the case, including dismissal, release of the defendant pending  
6 judicial proceedings, any conditions of release, a negotiated plea, and entry into a  
7 pretrial diversion program.
- 8 (7) In prosecution for offenses listed in this section for the purpose of defining  
9 "victim," law enforcement agencies and attorneys for the Commonwealth shall  
10 promptly return a victim's property held for evidentiary purposes unless there is a  
11 compelling reason for retaining it. Photographs of such property shall be received  
12 by the court as competent evidence in accordance with the provisions of KRS  
13 422.350.
- 14 (8) A victim or witness who so requests shall be assisted by law enforcement agencies  
15 and attorneys for the Commonwealth in informing employers that the need for  
16 victim or witness cooperation in the prosecution of the case may necessitate absence  
17 of that victim or witness from work.
- 18 (9) The Attorney General, where possible, shall provide technical assistance to law  
19 enforcement agencies and attorneys for the Commonwealth if such assistance is  
20 requested for establishing a victim assistance program.
- 21 (10) If a defendant seeks appellate review of a conviction and the Commonwealth is  
22 represented by the Attorney General, the Attorney General shall make a reasonable  
23 effort to notify victims promptly of the appeal, the status of the case, and the  
24 decision of the appellate court.
- 25 **(11) Full restitution to a named victim, if there is a named victim, shall be ordered by**  
26 **the court to be paid by the convicted or adjudicated party in a manner consistent,**  
27 **insofar as possible, with this section and KRS 439.563, 532.032, 532.033,**

1       533.020, and 533.030 in addition to any other penalty.

2       (12) Nothing in KRS 421.500 to 421.575 shall be construed as altering the  
3       presumption of innocence in the criminal justice system, or to be a waiver of  
4       sovereign immunity or any other immunity or privilege maintained by the  
5       Commonwealth; its cabinets, departments, bureaus, political subdivisions, and  
6       agencies; and its officers, agents, and employees.

7       ➔Section 3. KRS 421.510 is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

8       (1) Where the victim is less than sixteen (16) years old and the crime is a sexual offense  
9       including violations of KRS 510.040 to 510.150, 530.020, 530.064(1)(a), 530.070,  
10       531.310, 531.320, and 531.370, a speedy trial may be scheduled as provided in  
11       subsection (2) of this section.

12       (2) The court, upon motion by the attorney for the Commonwealth for a speedy trial,  
13       shall set a hearing date on the motion within ten (10) days of the date of the motion.  
14       If the motion is granted, the trial shall be scheduled within ninety (90) days from the  
15       hearing date.

16       (3) In ruling on any motion or other request for a delay or continuance of the  
17       proceedings, the court shall consider and give weight to any adverse impact the  
18       delay or continuance may have on the well-being of a child victim or witness.

19       ➔Section 4. KRS 421.520 is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

20       (1) The attorney for the Commonwealth shall notify the victim that, upon conviction of  
21       the defendant, the victim has the right to submit a written victim impact statement  
22       to the probation officer responsible for preparing the presentence investigation  
23       report for inclusion in the report or to the court should such a report be waived by  
24       the defendant.

25       (2) The impact statement may contain, but need not be limited to, a description of the  
26       nature and extent of any physical, psychological or financial harm suffered by the  
27       victim, the victim's need for restitution and whether the victim has applied for or

1 received compensation for financial loss, and the victim's recommendation for an  
2 appropriate sentence.

3 (3) The victim impact statement shall be considered by the court prior to any decision  
4 on the sentencing or release, including shock probation, of the defendant.

5 ➔Section 5. KRS 421.530 is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

6 (1) If a defendant is sentenced to a period of incarceration and his release is subject to  
7 the authority of the parole board, the victim may submit a written impact statement  
8 to the parole board that it shall consider when making a decision on the release of  
9 the defendant.

10 (2) The impact statement may contain, but need not be limited to, a description of the  
11 long-term consequences of the crime, including but not necessarily limited to, the  
12 physical, psychological and financial harm suffered by the victim, and whether the  
13 victim has applied for or received compensation for financial loss.

14 ➔Section 6. KRS 421.550 is amended to read as follows:

15 (1) Nothing in KRS 421.500 to 421.575~~[421.510 to 421.540], [or KRS]~~ 15.245, or  
16 196.280~~[, or 421.500]~~ creates a cause of action for money damages against the state,  
17 a county, a municipality, or any of their agencies, public officials, or employees.

18 (2) The jailer or chief administrator of a juvenile detention facility, regional jail, or  
19 county jail, or any of their respective designees who acts in good faith in making  
20 available the release information required by KRS 196.280, or in good faith fails or  
21 is unable to provide the release information required by KRS 196.280, shall be  
22 immune from any criminal liability.

23 (3) The jailer or chief administrator of a juvenile detention facility, regional jail, or  
24 county jail, or any of their respective designees, who acts in good faith in making  
25 available the release information required by KRS 196.280, or in good faith fails or  
26 is unable to provide the release information required by KRS 196.280, and who is  
27 sued for any act or omission in relation to KRS 196.280, and who has a judgment

1 rendered against him and who personally suffers actual financial loss, unreimbursed  
2 from any source, by the enforcement and satisfaction of the judgment, including any  
3 costs or attorney's fees awarded pursuant thereto, shall be indemnified by the  
4 Commonwealth from funds appropriated to the Finance and Administration Cabinet  
5 for the payment of judgments, to the extent of his actual financial loss. The  
6 indemnification shall not be construed to abrogate or limit any privilege, immunity,  
7 or matter of defense otherwise available to the person claiming indemnification and  
8 shall not constitute a waiver of any privilege, immunity, or matter of defense,  
9 including the sovereign immunity of the Commonwealth.

10 (4) The Attorney General shall defend the jailer, chief administrator, or designee upon  
11 request, in any suit related to the provision of information under KRS 196.280.

12 (5) An attorney for the Commonwealth who acts in good faith in his or her  
13 ministerial duties under KRS 421.500 to 421.575 shall be immune from criminal  
14 or civil liability. The immunity shall not be construed to abrogate or limit any  
15 privilege, immunity, or matter of defense otherwise available and shall not  
16 constitute a waiver of any privilege, immunity, or matter of defense, including the  
17 sovereign immunity of the Commonwealth.

18 ➔Section 7. The following KRS section is repealed:

19 421.540 Effect of failure to provide required notification.

20 ➔Section 8. This Act shall take effect only upon the ratification, in the general  
21 election of November 3, 2020, of a Constitutional amendment providing for the  
22 protection of crime victims' rights. If such an amendment is not ratified, this Act shall be  
23 void.