

We are pleased to report that we had compelling panels of survivors, providers and public officials testifying at the Joint Judiciary Committee's Public Hearing on July 14th on behalf of Senate Bill 1559, *An Act to Protect and Enhance the Rights of Child and Adult Victims and Witness of Crime*.

As many of you know, there were over 200 bills scheduled for the July 14th hearing. With limited time to testify, we developed our panels to effectively represent the many critical provisions of the bill and support from victims and survivors, criminal justice officials, legislators and state and community agency leaders. The testimony highlighted existing gaps in the Victim Bill of Rights (MGL c.258B) and how provisions of Senate Bill 1559 address those current and critical needs without compromising defendants' constitutional rights.

Selected List of Supporters/Testifiers at Public Hearing:

- Yoko Kato, survivor of domestic violence homicide, Victim and Witness Assistance Board Member
- Fernanda Gonzalez, survivor of homicide
- Kim Odom, survivor of homicide
- Barbara Pryor, survivor of homicide
- Lt. Governor Timothy Murray
- Secretary Kevin Burke (Executive Office of Public Safety)
- Attorney General Martha Coakley (Chair, Victim and Witness Assistance Board)
- District Attorneys Jonathan Blodgett (Essex County), William Keating (Norfolk County) and Samuel Sutter (Bristol County) – note: the DAs unanimously endorse this bill
- Several legislators including our House Lead Sponsor, Representative Peter Koutoujian
- Ralph Calderaro, General Counsel, Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC)
- Marylou Sudders, President and CEO, Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC)
- Daphne Crowell, Victim and Witness Assistance Program Director, Bristol County DA's Office
- Janet Fine, Executive Director, Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance

Based on initial feedback from Judiciary Committee staff, legislators, public officials and colleagues within the statewide victim rights community, we orchestrated a well organized and effective presentation. We look forward to keeping you updated and actively involved as Senate Bill 1559 moves through the legislative process and, in the meantime, we will be working diligently to maintain the momentum and support for this important legislation.

Please feel free to contact Christopher Klaskin - Legislative Affairs Coordinator (617-727-7885) with any comments, questions or concerns related to the Judiciary Public Hearing or provisions outlined in Senate Bill 1559.