

**MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER**

July 17, 2018

**Addressing Discrepancies in Victims Services and Restitution****BACKGROUND:**

In 2008, California voters approved Marsy's Law, which provides for 17 Constitutional rights of victims in the judicial process, including the rights of the victim and the victim's family in bail and parole consideration. The law also provides that: *"It is the unequivocal intention of the People of the State of California that all persons who suffer losses as a result of criminal activity shall have the right to seek and secure restitution from the persons convicted of the crimes causing the losses they suffer."*

In 2017, there were 177,570 victims of crime in Los Angeles County of which 11,293 were victims of violent crime, including murder, rape, domestic violence, crimes involving guns and gangs. Victims play a vital role in the criminal justice system which is highly complex and challenging to navigate especially for children, seniors and other vulnerable populations prolonging their healing process and exacerbating the negative impacts already suffered by them, their families and communities.

**PAST BOARD ACTIONS:**

The Board has taken a number of actions to increase and enhance services for victims. On July 29, 2014, the Board approved a motion requesting the District Attorney to provide an overview of resources available to victims, identifying gaps in programs, and providing recommendations to enhance support and services to victims.

On November 12, 2014, the Board approved a motion requesting the District Attorney to work with the Chief Executive Officer to develop a comprehensive Victims Services Strategic Plan, increasing the quantity of victim sites and service levels and expanding services to victims of non-violent crimes.

**MOTION**

SOLIS \_\_\_\_\_

RIDLEY-THOMAS \_\_\_\_\_

HAHN \_\_\_\_\_

BARGER \_\_\_\_\_

KUEHL \_\_\_\_\_

On August 4, 2015, the Board approved a motion allocating funding to the District Attorney's Office for purposes of increasing the number of victim services representatives (VSRs) and asking for a review of existing gaps in victim's services.

Lastly, on April 12, 2016, the Board approved a motion to adopt six recommendations related to victims restitution as well as identifying systems issues and resource needs.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

There has been progress in advancing support for victims in Los Angeles County with approximately 30 Victims Rights Representatives assigned to eight locations along with a facility dog team to assist victims suffering from trauma.

However, access to services for our victims, especially vulnerable populations in underserved communities where crime rates may be higher, remains extremely challenging for the Bureau of Victims Services.

The County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) also provides important services for crime victims, especially those who cannot be made whole through restitution. For example, DCBA can assist victims of financial and real estate fraud correct their credit scores and unwind fraudulent transactions. These services complement the Bureau of Victims Services' efforts to undo the harms caused by crime.

In order to better assess the adequacy and alignment of the county's current level of victim services to the needs, including the progress made by past Board actions and programmatic and other needs which may remain unmet, the county should update its Victims Services Strategic Plan.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors:

Request the District Attorney, working with the Chief Executive Office and in consultation with DCBA, to provide the Board with an updated Victims Services Strategic Plan, which should include but not be limited to, a review of improvements/accomplishments based on past Board actions, programmatic or other needs that remain incomplete/unmet, along with recommendations aimed towards enhancing victim services and protecting the constitutional rights of victims in 90 days.

# # #

SUP:KB:sed