



KIRWAN INSTITUTE
for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

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Senator Bill Coley
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Senator Coley,

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity is an interdisciplinary engaged research institute at [The Ohio State University](http://www.theohiostate.edu) established in May 2003. Our mission is simple: we work to create a just and inclusive society where all people and communities have opportunity to succeed. We do this through research, engagement, and communication. We work to provide research to assist public sector and nonprofit organizations throughout the State. Our web page is <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/>.

The Kirwan Institute was recently made aware of your committee and were contacted by Ohioans to Stop Executions and Murder Victim Families for Reconciliation, regarding the need for research to better understand the current landscape of victim services. We are interested in assisting with respect to the work to assess what services are currently available to the families of homicide victims, how such services are accessed, and the consistency of delivery of such services across the state. An effective study must compile information that is institutionally available and assess that in conjunction with the real experiences (both positive and negative) of Ohio homicide

survivors. While not vital, it would also be prudent to understand how Ohio compares to other states in these matters.

We can help, and we can do so with the sort of academic rigor, guided by principles of equity and fairness. Our work would provide the legislature with the best possible data, analysis and recommendations toward understanding and improving the ways homicide survivors in Ohio are served in the wake of the sudden and tragic loss of their loved one(s).

Concurrently, it would be vital to gather input from Ohioans with direct experience on the matter to provide tangible data demonstrating actual experiences of homicide survivors in accessing support in the wake of the murder of their loved one(s).

The purpose of such a process would be to document all of the homicide victim service providers in Ohio and the services they provide. By adding feedback of those who have been served by these agencies, we would provide a document or set of documents to the legislature which would assess the system as it presently exists, including a narrative of experiences, a mandate for what should be standard, and, if necessary, recommendations for additional resources and improvements necessary in order to make Ohio a leader in supporting homicide survivors.

We propose a two tiered process for data collection:

#1 – Using a brief on-line survey tool to be disseminated to the more than 300 Ohio agencies currently known to be providing services to crime victims, we would confirm and categorize all of those agencies, the precise services and resources offered to homicide survivors, methods of delivery of same, and the perceived limitations and recommendations for improvement by the service providers themselves. As we compile the data, we may find it useful to conduct follow up interviews with a selection of the respondents. It would be important for the committee to encourage participation by all government agencies providing such services using whatever means are available.

#2 – Using a brief on-line survey tool to be disseminated as widely as possible (by victim service providers to past clients and via media outreach), we would gather the experiences, feedback and recommendations of Ohio homicide survivors themselves. Participation in this would be strictly voluntary.

We understand the committee seeks to complete its work before the June recess. Therefore work must begin immediately in order to make meaningful contributions the Joint Committee process. With proper resources, working with your staff, Ohio victim advocates (both governmental and non-governmental) and interested parties, we can prepare the survey tool and assemble the team by the end of February, be in the field in March and April and prepare a report by mid-May. This would allow the Joint Committee to review the findings and recommendations and complete its work by the June recess.

We would like to know if funding can be made available to support this research. The Kirwan Institute would provide oversight and guidance, but would need to hire graduate students in

order to complete this research in the currently available time frame. We estimate expenditures between \$10,000 and \$20,000 and are happy to assist the committee with this research.

Best regards,

Jason W. Reece

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