



State of Rhode Island
Office of the General Treasurer

James A. Diossa
General Treasurer

8 April 2026

The Honorable Marvin Abney
Chair, House Committee on Finance

The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance

RE: 2026-H 8155 – *An Act Relating to Criminal Procedure – Criminal Injuries Compensation*

Chair Abney:

I write in strong support of 2026-H 8155, a simple inflation adjustment to relocation benefits provided through Treasury’s Crime Victim Compensation Program (“CVCP” or the “Program”) that will have little to no budgetary impact.

Under certain circumstances, the CVCP may award victims emergency compensation to cover (1) burial expenses, (2) crime scene cleanup, (3) relocation expenses, and (4) reasonable home security modifications. *Id.* State law prescribes limits for the portion of a victim’s award that may be used for each of these purposes. *Id.* Each approved victim is entitled to an award of up to \$25,000. Should a victim have a justifiable safety concern in their residence – as would be the case if the underlying crime was domestic battery – the victim may use up to \$5,000 of their award to relocate.

This legislation proposes a modest \$3,000 increase in that statutory cap, from \$5,000 to \$8,000. Relocation costs were last amended ten years ago – in 2016 – when they were increased from \$2,500 to the current \$5,000. *See* 2016-H 7533-A (Blazejewski). In the intervening years, changes in inflation and the dramatic rise in housing costs have diluted the efficacy of this emergency award. **This amendment will help ensure the Program is able to provide meaningful emergency support for housing.**

This bill will not increase total available compensation and will not have a budgetary impact or otherwise diminish Program resources. Consistent with state law, “[a]ny payments made for emergency compensation shall be deducted from the final award. In no event shall the final award

exceed the maximum award of [\$25,000].” R.I. Gen. Laws § 12-25-21.1. **As such, a \$3,000 increase to the relocation cap just changes the *portion* of a victim’s award that may be used for that particular purpose – it will not increase total program awards.** A fiscal note prepared by the Office of Management & Budget concerning the identical Senate companion to this bill confirmed this conclusion, finding that “this bill *does not increase the total award available to the victim,*” concluding that the fiscal impact of this bill is “likely to be minimal or \$0.”

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly or to my Director of Policy and Intergovernmental Affairs, Robert Craven, Jr., at Robert.CravenJr@treasury.ri.gov.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JD' or similar initials, enclosed within a circular flourish.

James A. Diossa
General Treasurer

cc: The Honorable Grace Diaz