



Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision

VIRTUAL **ABM 2021**

VICTIMS ADVOCATE REPORT

To: Commissioners of the Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision

From: John W. Gillis, Ex-officio, National Organization for Victim Assistance

Through a collaborative agreement, the Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision (ICAOS) and the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) have established a protocol to assist victims encountering problems with interstate parole issues. In order that crime victims may receive information, or assistance, from the appropriate agency, ICAOS and NOVA are expanding outreach to crime victims, especially to victims of sexual assault and other violent crimes.

Victim Assistance

The most frequent complaint from crime victims is their inability to make it known they want to “be heard” on issues related to their victimization, when a violent perpetrator is pending released or has already been released in or near the victims’ community. In many instances, victims receive the notification from friends, relatives, and even perpetrators. These are situations when the victim has not been given an opportunity to “be heard” before the paroling authority makes decisions that could jeopardize victims’ safety. Often, when victims attempt to get information regarding their perpetrator they are bounced back and forth between state paroling authorities, with unsatisfactory results.

At the Executive Committee meeting held May 19, 2021, Ex-officio member John Gillis recommended to ICAOS Executive Committee that a process be established whereby victims could be assisted with Interstate Compact issues.

The following program was approved and adopted by the Executive Committee. The program was designed and implemented by ICAOS Executive Director Ashley Lippert and NOVA Executive Director Claire Selib:

Victim Interstate Compact Information and Coordination Program

- Email address where victims can seek assistance on issues relating to Interstate Compact is ICAOS-help@trynova.org.
- NOVA & ICAOS will publicize the web address through organization newsletters and networking.

- NOVA will staff and monitor email.
- NOVA staff will make personal contact with victim within twenty-four business hours after email is received.
 - If the victims' stated concern is not an ICAOS issue, NOVA will direct the victim to the appropriate agency.
 - If the problem should be addressed by ICAOS, the NOVA Executive Director will contact ICAOS Executive Director for guidance or resolution.

ICAOS and NOVA will continue to examine the reasons why so many sexual assault victims, and other crime victims, are underserved by paroling authorities. We believe we must continue to do everything possible to ensure that crime victims are treated fairly, with dignity, and respect, when dealing with our criminal justice system. Crime victims are truly overwhelmed by the parole system, especially when it comes to interstate transfers and releases.

In a 2018, the Office of Justice Programs released an update to its 9-year study on prisoner recidivism. The update revealed "about 1 in 4 state prisoners released in the 30 states in 2005 were in prison for a violent offense". The study included 401,288 prisoners released in thirty states during 2005 and covered a 9-year follow-up period. Victimization studies have estimated that each violent crime parolee left behind an average of ten crime victims and other severely impacted individuals. When we review these statistics, it is no wonder why, each year, millions of victims live in fear because they do not know when or where their perpetrators will be released from prison.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Gillis

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