



State of New York

Executive Chamber

Citation

Whereas, New York State has long been a national leader in fighting crime as well as advancing crime victims' rights, fully committed to assisting victims by providing services and support, and by treating them with the compassion and dignity they deserve; this year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the New York State Crime Victims Compensation Board, created through legislation signed on August 1, 1966, at the time making New York State only the second state in the nation to establish an independent agency for providing an important safety net for men, women, and children victimized by crime; and

Whereas, the agency was created in response to the murder of 28-year-old Arthur Collins, a Good Samaritan who was stabbed to death in front of his young wife and 15-month old child aboard a Manhattan subway in 1965, leaving them with no means of support; and

Whereas, in the five decades since, the agency has paid tens of millions of dollars in compensation to victims and their families, including those injured or killed in some of the most devastating crimes in the state's history: the Happy Land Social Club arson that killed 87 in the Bronx in 1990, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in 1993 and 2001, and the American Civic Association shooting that claimed 13 lives in 2009 in Binghamton; and

Whereas, compensation has helped victims and their families with medical, dental, and mental health bills, funeral and burial expenses, lost wages and support, among other assistance, and New York is the only state with no limit on reimbursement for medical bills or counseling, therefore, eligible individuals can receive help as long as they need it; and

Whereas, the agency also had an integral role in the passage of the state's 'Son of Sam' law, first enacted to prevent individuals from profiting from their crimes and which was twice amended, initially to address a court challenge and, secondly, to include "funds of a convicted person," enabling the agency to freeze nearly \$30 million, thereby allowing victims the opportunity to file a legal claims for compensation from said funds of the perpetrators; and

Whereas, in addition to processing more than 16,000 claims annually and providing compensation, the agency currently administers over \$43.8 million in state and federal funding that supports 223 programs providing counseling, crisis intervention, advocacy and legal assistance – among other services – to crime victims in every county of the state; and

Whereas, renamed the Office of Victim Services in 2010, today the agency remains true to its original mission set forth half a century ago, while continuing to expand its advocacy efforts and the breadth of services it offers; funding for its work comes primarily from fines, mandatory surcharges, and crime victim assistance fees paid by offenders upon conviction in a state or federal court; and

Whereas, New York State values victims' rights, honors the strength of courageous individuals who are willing to speak about their experiences to educate and empower others, and remembers those whose lives have been altered by crime, and we join in congratulating the leadership and staff at the Office of Victim Services as they uphold the agency's critical mission and continue to provide help and hope to injured and traumatized crime victims and their families, allowing them to begin the process of healing;

Now, Therefore, I, Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby confer this Special Citation in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES

with recognition and gratitude for its dedication, responsible service, and compassion for crime victims and their families.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew M. Cuomo".

Governor
August 2016