

What Is a Victim Impact Statement and How Is It Used?

As a crime victim, you have the opportunity to use this Victim Impact Statement to describe how this crime has affected you and others close to you. If the defendant pleads guilty or is found guilty after trial, your impact statement will help the judge understand how this crime has affected you and those close to you. Our judges do take the time to read and consider the concerns of victims.

Filling out this statement is voluntary

You do not have to fill out a victim impact statement. However, it may be helpful to the judge when he or she decides what sentence the defendant should receive.

Your statement will become an official court document after it is given to the court. The defendant and/or the defendant's attorney will also be able to read what you have written. They may even ask you questions about your statement in court.

No one knows better than you how this crime may have changed your life. Those of us involved in your case believe that it is very important for you to help the court understand all of the ways this crime has affected you and those near you. Thank you for taking the time to provide us with this information.

Suggestions for Completing Your Impact Statement

The following suggestions are offered only as a guide in filling out this form. Feel free to write in your own words how this crime has affected you and those close to you.

- ❖ Take a few days to think about what you want to convey to the Judge.
- ❖ Keep a list of thoughts and ideas you have so that you can use those in preparing your statement.
- ❖ For greatest effect, a short, concise, legible statement is best---**staying away from commenting on the defendant's behavior or character, except to describe how the crime has affected you/your family.**

If you don't feel comfortable with this form, please feel free to use whatever format best suits your needs.

For Help With Your Victim Impact Statement

If you have any questions while writing your impact statement, or if our office can help you in any way, please feel free to contact us:

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