WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE
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REGULAR SESSION, 2009

ENROLLED
COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
Senate Bill No. 451

(Senators Kessler, Snyder, D. Facemyer and White, original sponsors)

[Passed April 11, 2009; to take effect July 1, 2009.]
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(SENATORS KESSLER, SNYDER, D. FACEMIRE AND WHITE, original sponsors)

[Passed April 11, 2009; to take effect July 1, 2009.]

AN ACT to amend and reenact §14-2A-3 and §14-2A-14 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, all relating generally to compensation awards to victims of crimes; expanding the definition of “criminally injurious conduct”; increasing allowable victim relocation costs; allowing payment for reasonable travel expenses for the transportation of a victim to or from a medical facility; increasing the amount that may be paid to a victim and to all other claimants sustaining economic loss because of injury to that victim; and removing the provision that prohibits the voluntary intoxication of a victim from being a defense against the estate of a deceased victim.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That §14-2A-3 and §14-2A-14 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended and reenacted, all to read as follows:
ARTICLE 2A. COMPENSATION AWARDS TO VICTIMS OF CRIMES.


1 As used in this article, the term:
2  (a) "Claimant" means any of the following persons, whether residents or nonresidents of this state, who claim an award of compensation under this article:
3  (1) A victim, except the term "victim" does not include a nonresident of this state where the criminally injurious act did not occur in this state;
4  (2) A dependent, spouse or minor child of a deceased victim; or in the event that the deceased victim is a minor, the parents, legal guardians and siblings of the victim;
5  (3) A third person, other than a collateral source, who legally assumes or voluntarily pays the obligations of a victim, or of a dependent of a victim, which obligations are incurred as a result of the criminally injurious conduct that is the subject of the claim;
6  (4) A person who is authorized to act on behalf of a victim, dependent or a third person who is not a collateral source, including, but not limited to, assignees, persons holding power of attorney or other persons who hold authority to make or submit claims in place of or on behalf of a victim, a dependent or third person who is not a collateral source; and, in the event that the victim, dependent or third person who is not a collateral source is a minor or other legally incompetent person, the duly qualified fiduciary of the minor;
7  (5) A person who is a secondary victim in need of mental health counseling due to the person's exposure to the crime committed. An award to a secondary victim may not exceed $1,000; and
(6) A person who owns real property damaged by the operation of a methamphetamine laboratory without the knowledge or consent of the owner of the real property.

(b) "Collateral source" means a source of benefits or advantages for economic loss otherwise compensable that the victim or claimant has received, or that is readily available to him or her, from any of the following sources:

(1) The offender, including any restitution received from the offender pursuant to an order by a court of law sentencing the offender or placing him or her on probation following a conviction in a criminal case arising from the criminally injurious act for which a claim for compensation is made;

(2) The government of the United States or any of its agencies, a state or any of its political subdivisions or an instrumentality of two or more states;

(3) Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid;

(4) State-required, temporary, nonoccupational disability insurance; other disability insurance;

(5) Workers' compensation;

(6) Wage continuation programs of any employer;

(7) Proceeds of a contract of insurance payable to the victim or claimant for loss that was sustained because of the criminally injurious conduct;

(8) A contract providing prepaid hospital and other health care services or benefits for disability; and

(9) That portion of the proceeds of all contracts of insurance payable to the claimant on account of the death of the victim which exceeds $25,000.

(c) "Criminally injurious conduct" means conduct that occurs or is attempted in this state or in any state not
having a victim compensation program which by its
nature poses a substantial threat of personal injury or
death and is punishable by fine or imprisonment or death
or would be so punishable but for the fact that the person
engaging in the conduct lacked capacity to commit the
crime under the laws of this state. Criminally injurious
conduct also includes criminally injurious conduct com-
mitted outside of the United States against a resident of
this state. Criminally injurious conduct does not include
crime arising out of the ownership, maintenance or use
of a motor vehicle, except when the person engaging in the
conduct intended to cause personal injury or death, or
when the person engaging in the conduct committed
negligent homicide, driving under the influence of alcohol,
controlled substances or drugs, reckless driving or when
the person leaves the scene of the accident.

(d) “Dependent” means an individual who received over
half of his or her support from the victim. For the purpose
of determining whether an individual received over half of
his or her support from the victim, there shall be taken
into account the amount of support received from the
victim as compared to the entire amount of support which
the individual received from all sources, including support
which the individual himself or herself supplied. The term
“support” includes, but is not limited to, food, shelter,
clothing, medical and dental care and education. The term
“dependent” includes a child of the victim born after his
or her death.

(e) “Economic loss” means economic detriment consist-
ing only of allowable expense, work loss and replacement
services loss. If criminally injurious conduct causes death,
economic loss includes a dependent’s economic loss and a
dependent’s replacement services loss. Noneconomic
detriment is not economic loss; however, economic loss
may be caused by pain and suffering or physical impair-
ment. For purposes of this article, the term “economic loss” includes a lost scholarship as defined in this section.

(f) (1) “Allowable expense” means reasonable charges incurred or to be incurred for reasonably needed products, services and accommodations, including those for medical care, mental health counseling, prosthetic devices, eye glasses, dentures, rehabilitation and other remedial treatment and care.

(2) Allowable expense includes a total charge not in excess of $7,000 for expenses in any way related to funerals, cremations and burials. It does not include that portion of a charge for a room in a hospital, clinic, convalescent home, nursing home or any other institution engaged in providing nursing care and related services in excess of a reasonable and customary charge for semiprivate accommodations, unless accommodations other than semiprivate accommodations are medically required.

(3) Allowable expense also includes:

(A) A charge, not to exceed $5,000, for cleanup of real property damaged by a methamphetamine laboratory or a charge, not to exceed $1,000, for any other crime scene cleanup;

(B) Victim relocation costs, not to exceed $2,000;

(C) Reasonable travel expenses, not to exceed $1,000, for a claimant to attend court proceedings that are conducted for the prosecution of the offender;

(D) Reasonable travel expenses for a claimant to return a person who is a minor or incapacitated adult who has been unlawfully removed from this state to another state or country, if the removal constitutes a crime under the laws of this state. Reasonable travel expenses to another state for that purpose may not exceed $2,000 and reason-
able travel expenses for that purpose to another county may not exceed $3,000; and

(E) Reasonable travel expenses for the transportation of a victim to and from a medical facility.

(g) "Work loss" means loss of income from work that the injured person would have performed if he or she had not been injured and expenses reasonably incurred or to be incurred by him or her to obtain services in lieu of those he or she would have performed for income, reduced by any income from substitute work actually performed or to be performed by him or her or by income he or she would have earned in available appropriate substitute work that he or she was capable of performing but unreasonably failed to undertake. "Work loss" also includes loss of income from work by the parent or legal guardian of a minor victim who must miss work to take care of the minor victim.

(h) "Replacement services loss" means expenses reasonably incurred or to be incurred in obtaining ordinary and necessary services in lieu of those the injured person would have performed, not for income but for the benefit of himself or herself or his or her family, if he or she had not been injured.

(i) "Dependent's economic loss" means loss after a victim's death of contributions or things of economic value to his or her dependents, not including services they would have received from the victim if he or she had not suffered the fatal injury, less expenses of the dependents avoided by reason of the victim's death.

(j) "Dependent's replacement service loss" means loss reasonably incurred or to be incurred by dependents after a victim's death in obtaining ordinary and necessary services in lieu of those the victim would have performed for their benefit if he or she had not suffered the fatal injury, less expenses of the dependents avoided by reason
of the victim’s death and not subtracted in calculating
dependent’s economic loss.

(k) “Victim” means a person who suffers personal injury
or death as a result of any one of the following: (1) Crimi-
nally injurious conduct; (2) the good faith effort of the
person to prevent criminally injurious conduct; or (3) the
good faith effort of the person to apprehend a person that
the injured person has observed engaging in criminally
injurious conduct or who the injured person has reason-
able cause to believe has engaged in criminally injurious
conduct immediately prior to the attempted apprehension.
“Victim” includes the owner of real property damaged by
the operation of a methamphetamine laboratory.

(l) “Contributory misconduct” means any conduct of the
claimant, or of the victim through whom the claimant
claims an award, that is unlawful or intentionally tortious
and that, without regard to the conduct’s proximity in
time or space to the criminally injurious conduct, has
causal relationship to the criminally injurious conduct
that is the basis of the claim and shall also include the
voluntary intoxication of the claimant, either by the
consumption of alcohol or the use of any controlled
substance when the intoxication has a causal connection
or relationship to the injury sustained.

(m) “Lost scholarship” means a scholarship, academic
award, stipend or other monetary scholastic assistance
which had been awarded or conferred upon a victim in
conjunction with a post-secondary school educational
program and which the victim is unable to receive or use,
in whole or in part, due to injuries received from crimi-
nally injurious conduct.

§14-2A-14. Grounds for denial of claim or reduction of awards;
maximum awards.

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b), section ten of
this article, the judge or commissioner may not approve an
award of compensation to a claimant who did not file his or her application for an award of compensation within two years after the date of the occurrence of the criminally injurious conduct that caused the injury or death for which he or she is seeking an award of compensation.

(b) The judge or commissioner may not approve an award of compensation if the criminally injurious conduct upon which the claim is based was not reported to a law-enforcement officer or agency within seventy-two hours after the occurrence of the conduct, unless it is determined that good cause existed for the failure to report the conduct within the 72-hour period.

(c) The judge or commissioner may not approve an award of compensation to a claimant who is the offender or an accomplice of the offender who committed the criminally injurious conduct, nor to any claimant if the award would unjustly benefit the offender or his or her accomplice.

(d) A judge or commissioner, upon a finding that the claimant or victim has not fully cooperated with appropriate law-enforcement agencies or the claim investigator, may deny a claim, reduce an award of compensation or reconsider a claim already approved.

(e) A judge or commissioner may not approve an award of compensation if the injury occurred while the victim was confined in any state, county or regional jail, prison, private prison or correctional facility.

(f) After reaching a decision to approve an award of compensation, but prior to announcing the approval, the judge or commissioner shall require the claimant to submit current information as to collateral sources on forms prescribed by the Clerk of the Court of Claims. The judge or commissioner shall reduce an award of compensation or deny a claim for an award of compensation that is other-
wise payable to a claimant to the extent that the economic loss upon which the claim is based is or will be recouped from other persons, including collateral sources, or if the reduction or denial is determined to be reasonable because of the contributory misconduct of the claimant or of a victim through whom he or she claims. If an award is reduced or a claim is denied because of the expected recoupment of all or part of the economic loss of the claimant from a collateral source, the amount of the award or the denial of the claim shall be conditioned upon the claimant's economic loss being recouped by the collateral source: Provided, That if it is thereafter determined that the claimant will not receive all or part of the expected recoupment, the claim shall be reopened and an award shall be approved in an amount equal to the amount of expected recoupment that it is determined the claimant will not receive from the collateral source, subject to the limitation set forth in subsection (g) of this section.

(g) (1) Except in the case of death, or as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, compensation payable to a victim and to all other claimants sustaining economic loss because of injury to that victim may not exceed $35,000 in the aggregate. Compensation payable to all claimants because of the death of the victim may not exceed $50,000 in the aggregate.

(2) In the event the victim's personal injuries are so severe as to leave the victim with a disability, as defined in Section 223 of the Social Security Act, as amended, as codified in 42 U. S. C. §423, the court may award an additional amount, not to exceed $100,000, for special needs attributable to the injury.

(h) If an award of compensation of $5,000 or more is made to a minor, a guardian shall be appointed pursuant to the provisions of article ten, chapter forty-four of this code to manage the minor's estate.
The Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

Chairman Senate Committee

Chairman House Committee

Originated in the Senate.

Takes effect July 1, 2009.

Clerk of the Senate

Clerk of the House of Delegates

President of the Senate

Speaker House of Delegates

The within is approved this the ___ Day of ______, 2009.

Governor