



March 5, 2024

Chairman Robert E. Craven, Sr.
House of Representatives Committee on Judiciary
House Lounge, State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: 2024- H7449

Dear Chairman Craven:

On behalf of Day One, we are presenting testimony in support of H7449 “An Act Relating to Criminal Procedure – Criminal Injuries Compensation.” This act would allow victims of sexual assault to submit evidence of a medical forensic exam performed by a licensed health care provider in lieu of a police report in order to establish eligibility for funds under the State Crime Victim Compensation Program.

This bill gives victims easier access to these funds. Through the Crime Victims Compensation Program, victims can access financial support for any costs associated with crimes committed against them. This includes any medical or counseling expenses and loss of earnings. This program also covers the critical and immediate need of relocation expenses. Increasing access to this program helps victims move forward and begin the appropriate steps toward healing.

The reality is, many victims of sexual assault do not file a police report. According to the *National Sexual Violence Resource Center*, nearly 70% of sexual assaults go unreported. Victims do not report for a variety of reasons. Victims may be traumatized from the abuse, incapable of processing what has happened, threatened by the abuser, and possibly dependent on the adults who abused them.

The pain of dealing with a sexual assault case can be extremely overwhelming. Allowing victims to use evidence of a sexual assault evidence exam in place of a police report will let more victims access these funds. Day One strongly supports passing this legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Peg Langhammer'.

Peg Langhammer
Executive Director, Day One