



OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT & BUDGET

State Budget Office

One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5890

Office: (401) 222-6300

State Fiscal Note for Bill Number:

2025-H 5974

Date of State Budget Office Approval: Monday, May 12, 2025

Date Requested: Tuesday, May 6, 2025

Date Due: Friday, May 16, 2025

<i>Impact on Expenditures</i>	<i>Impact on Revenues</i>
FY 2025 N/A	FY 2025 N/A
FY 2026 Indeterminate	FY 2026 N/A
FY 2027 Indeterminate	FY 2027 N/A

Explanation by State Budget Office:

This bill would allow victims sustaining a serious bodily injury resulting from a hit-and-run to recover compensation through the Crime Victim Compensation Program.

Summary of Facts and Assumptions:

The Crime Victim Compensation Program (CVCP) was established through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act of 1996, which enables the State of Rhode Island, through the Office of the General Treasurer, to compensate victims (or their beneficiaries) of violent crimes up to \$25,000 for certain expenses directly attributable to a crime. The Office of the General Treasurer may award compensation for personal injury or death that resulted from offenses that are listed in R.I. Gen. Laws § 12-25-20.

The list of crimes under which a victim may file an eligible claim includes but is not limited to assault, murder, manslaughter, and driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. Eligible reimbursable expenses include but are not limited to, medical, dental, and counseling expenses, relocation expenses, funeral expenses, and loss of earnings. The CVCP is a fund of last resort per R.I. Gen Laws § 12-25-23(b). This limits the number of qualifying claims, as claimants must demonstrate they have sought compensation from other sources, in accordance with Rhode Island Code of Regulations 120-RICR-00-00-2.11(B)(5), which include but are not limited to, criminal or civil actions, insurers, Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) benefits and/or hospital payment assistance programs.

H-5974 would amend R.I. Gen. Laws § 12-25-20 to include a hit-and-run crime resulting in serious bodily injury to the list of eligible offenses under which a victim suffering personal injury or death may be awarded compensation. Under current law, a victim (or beneficiaries) may be awarded compensation if they were a victim of a hit-and-run that resulted in the death of any person. The bill would take effect upon passage, therefore the effective date is assumed to be July 1, 2025.

However, CVCP claims involving vehicular crimes are uncommon. There were no claims filed for compensation related to crimes for driving under the influence (DUI), or any other vehicular crimes in federal fiscal year 2024. Over the past 3 federal fiscal years, an average of 3 claims relating to vehicular crimes received compensation annually, accounting for less than 1% of all claims. These claims accounted for an average of 2% of total claims paid out during this period.



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The CVCP functions as a fund of last resort, victims of crimes are only able to obtain compensation if they can prove that they have sought relief through other sources. It is possible that no claims were filed with the CVCP involving eligible vehicular crimes because victims were able to claim adequate relief from other sources. Victims suffering serious bodily injury resulting from hit-and-runs may be able to access most of these same sources, and therefore claims involving hit-and-runs may be uncommon if H-5974 is enacted.

However, it may also be possible that victims suffering serious bodily injury resulting from hit-and-runs may not be able to access the same relief as victims of other vehicular crimes. Victims of hit-and-runs may not be able to seek recourse through the judicial system through criminal or civil actions, especially in the absence of an identifiable defendant. This may lead victims of hit-and-runs to seek relief from other sources, such as the CVCP. The Budget Office has estimated a potential range of fiscal impacts, in light of the absence of data regarding the behavior and available compensation of hit-and-run victims who suffer serious bodily injury.

The Fatality and Injury Reporting System (FIRST), provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), provides hit-and-run fatality data at the state level, and hit-and-run injury and fatality data at the national level. The Budget Office used national traffic data from 2012 to 2022 to estimate the proportional relationship between fatalities and injuries resulting from hit-and-runs. From 2012 to 2022, the national incidence of injuries resulting from a hit-and-run was greater than fatalities resulting from a hit-and-run by an average factor of 100. During this same time period, there were 33 fatalities resulting from a hit-and-run accident in Rhode Island, averaging 3 fatalities a year.

The Budget Office makes several assumptions to estimate a range of possible fiscal impacts of this bill. The Budget Office assumes that in Rhode Island, an average of 3 fatalities occur a year that result from hit-and-runs. The Budget Office also assumes that the proportional relationship of injuries to fatalities of hit-and-runs that exists at the national level is consistent for Rhode Island. The Budget Office estimates that about 300 hit-and-runs that result in injury occur every year in Rhode Island.

Since the CVCP is a fund of last resort, the Budget Office has assumed that other sources, such as insurers or TDI, will provide compensation to at least some of the estimated 300 victims. Furthermore, since NHTSA injury data does not differentiate hit-and-run injuries according to severity, serious bodily injuries may only represent a portion of overall injuries from this dataset. H-5974 explicitly limits hit-and-run claims to those that result in serious bodily injury. Taking these considerations into account, the Budget Office will provide a range of fiscal impacts considering a subset of hit-and-run victims.

The Budget Office will provide a range of fiscal impacts estimating that 1% to 10% (3 to 30 claims) of victims may be awarded compensation. If 1% (or 3 claims) of hit-and-run victims are awarded compensation, this would equal the three-year average number of claims relating to all vehicular crimes.



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For fiscal year 2026, if 10% of victims file qualifying claims, with a 5-year average award of \$3,234, the total compensation awarded across all victims is estimated to total \$97,020, with \$55,440 coming from state sources. If 1% of victims file qualifying claims, the total compensation awarded across all victims is estimated to total \$9,702, with \$5,544 coming from state sources. The average award amounts for fiscal year 2026 were inflated by a projected Consumer Price Index (CPI) value of 2.4% to estimate the average award amounts for fiscal year 2027. For fiscal year 2027, if 10% of victims file qualifying claims, the total award across all victims is estimated to total \$99,348, with a state cost of \$56,771. If 5% of victims file qualifying claims, the total award across all victims is estimated to total \$9,935, with a state cost of \$5,677.

Comments on Sources of Funds:

The CVCP is funded by a mixture of general revenue, federal funding, and restricted receipts. Federal funding is provided by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), a program administered by the Department of Justice, which provides a 75% match to claims paid. Restricted receipts are comprised of court fees of offenders, some of which are used to support the CVCP. The Budget Office assumes that about 57% of the total awarded compensation is comprised of state sources, which in recent years has been evenly split between general revenue and restricted receipts.

Summary of Fiscal Impact:

FY 2025: N/A; Due to effective date of the bill.

FY 2026: Indeterminate

Without reliable data to indicate the propensity for victims with serious bodily injury resulting from a hit-and-run to file a qualifying claim, the fiscal impact of this bill is indeterminate. Please see discussion above for potential range of impacts.

FY 2027: Indeterminate

Without reliable data to indicate the propensity for victims with serious bodily injury resulting from a hit-and-run to file a qualifying claim, the fiscal impact of this bill is indeterminate. Please see discussion above for potential range of impacts.

Budget Office Signature: _____

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Andrew Zito

