



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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QUESTIONS FOR THE VICTIM ADVOCATE NOMINEE

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VICTIM ADVOCATE (CGS §§ [46a-13b](#), et. seq.)

Connecticut's victim advocate must be an attorney with the training and experience necessary to perform the duties of the position. This person must coordinate and cooperate with other private and public agencies concerned with the implementation, monitoring, and enforcement of the constitutional rights of victims. The victim advocate must work to protect and promote the constitutional rights of crime victims in Connecticut and take appropriate steps to advise the public of the services of the Office of Victim Advocate (OVA). Connecticut's victim advocate must act independently of any state department in the performance of the advocate's duties.

1. How has your experience as an assistant state's attorney and a legislative liaison prepared you for this position?
2. How do you plan to work with other entities, such as the Board of Pardons and Parole, and the witness protection program to better ensure the safety of victims?
3. The Newtown massacre has raised questions about victim rights. How can the legislature protect people to prevent them from becoming victims? What rights should the families of these victims have? What services should be available to them?
4. The ultimate objective of OVA is to help improve the way Connecticut's criminal justice system treats crime victims. How would you rate the job that the office is currently doing? What are some of your ideas for improving it?
5. By law, OVA may file a limited special appearance in certain court proceedings to advocate for a victim. This authority does not extend to infractions or misdemeanors that do not involve the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against another person. Do you think the law should be amended to consider cases that do not involve physical violence and if so, how?
6. Judicial victim advocates do not provide advocacy services to victims who do not sustain physical injury. Should the law be amended to incorporate those that have been victims of emotional abuse?
7. By law, court-based victim services advocates must notify crime victims of their rights and ask victims to attest to the notification by signing a form that is placed in the court files. One of the most frequent complaints of crime victims is that they are not informed of all their rights. How will you ensure that crime victims get notice of, and the opportunity to participate in, court proceedings?
8. As the victim advocate you must take appropriate steps to advise the public of OVA's services. What methods or techniques do you plan to employ to better educate victims and the general public about OVA's services?

9. What are the rights of the wrongly accused or wrongly convicted? Do they overlap with the rights of victims?
10. Some people, like the elderly and mentally or physically disabled, are especially susceptible to crime. How do you plan to ensure their rights are not violated?
11. OVA's independence from the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government is a vitally important feature of the office, one that is necessary for providing redress for crime victims. As Connecticut's victim advocate, how will you ensure your independence?

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