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## OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5238

### ***AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE VICTIM COMPENSATION PROGRAM.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill expands eligibility for compensation from the Victim Compensation Program to victims of child abuse or neglect substantiated by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). It also requires any DCF or children's advocacy center employee receiving the injury disclosure to notify the victim or the victim's parent, guardian, or legal representative, both verbally and in writing, (1) that the victim may be eligible for compensation through the state's program, (2) about the program application process, and (3) about the compensation types and amounts that may be awarded. The bill does not specify a time frame in which the notification must be made.

Under current law, a crime victim may be eligible for state compensation if he or she sustained personal injury or died as a result of a crime that occurred in Connecticut regardless of the applicant's state residency. In addition, Connecticut residents may be eligible if the crime occurred (1) in another state where they are not eligible for other compensation; (2) outside of the United States, if it would be considered a crime in Connecticut, and they are not eligible for other compensation; and (3) involving international terrorism outside of the country.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2022

#### **BACKGROUND**

##### ***Victim Compensation Program***

By law, the judicial branch's Office of Victim Services (OVS) administers the state's Victim Compensation Program. The maximum program payments are \$15,000 for personal injury, \$25,000 for survivor benefits, and \$5,000 for emotional harm (CGS § 54-211(d)(1)). However,

OVS or a victim compensation commissioner may award amounts above the statutory maximum for good cause shown and upon a finding of compelling equitable circumstances (CGS § 54-211(d)(3)).

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 13 Nay 0 (03/15/2022)