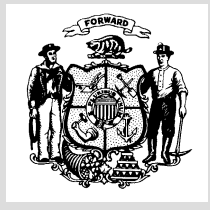


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**Crime Victims' Rights During Special
Procedures Implemented in Response to COVID-19**

The Wisconsin Crime Victims Rights Board urges all public officials, agencies and employees to honor and protect the statutory and constitutional rights of crime victims to the greatest extent possible during special criminal and juvenile justice procedures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Board recognizes that the rapidly evolving public health crisis caused by COVID-19 warrants special procedures in many circumstances. As officials implement these procedures, balancing individual rights against the need for social-distancing to reduce the spread of COVID-19, they must not neglect crime victims' rights as protected in the Wisconsin Constitution and enumerated in state statute. *See* Wis. Const. art. I, § 9m; Wis. Stat. ch. 950.

Any special criminal and juvenile justice procedures implemented in response to COVID-19 require consideration of the same victim rights implicated under normal circumstances. For example, crime victims have the right to receive information; to have an opportunity to consult with prosecutors and juvenile justice officials; to receive notice of hearings, proceedings, and certain releases; to attend proceedings; to provide information and statements to authorities concerning the crime; and to provide information and statements to authorities during proceedings, including certain release and sentence modification hearings. Any alternative procedures must include a reasonable opportunity for crime victims to exercise their rights in a safe and meaningful way.

Wisconsin's crime victims' rights law recognizes the importance of victim participation and cooperation to the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. To that end, the Wisconsin Constitution requires public officials and agencies to provide crime victims with numerous protections and privileges. During this extraordinary time, it is incumbent upon public officials to protect the legal rights of *all* participants in the justice system, including crime victims, to ensure the fair administration of justice.