



MIDDLESEX COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



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Victim Rights

The Middlesex District Attorney's Victim Witness Services Bureau is dedicated to ensuring that crime victims and witnesses are aware of their important entitlements and services mandated by the Massachusetts Victim Bill of Rights. The Victim Bill of Rights, **Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 258B**, mandates that victims and witnesses of crime have:

1. The Right to Be Informed.

Victim Witness Advocates provide written and verbal notification to victims and witnesses about the status of their cases and the dates of scheduled court hearings.

This notification process includes, arrest, arraignment, dangerousness hearings, pre-trial conferences, motions, probable cause hearings, grand jury, trials, defaults, dispositions, restitution hearings, sentencing and appeals.

Advocates notify victims and witnesses of cancelations and rescheduling either written or verbally depending on the amount of notice that the advocate is given.

2. The Right to Be Present.

Victims have the right to be present during most court proceedings. The judge may only exclude the victim or a family member when the victim or a family member is scheduled to testify, and the judge determines that hearing the testimony of other witnesses could influence the person's testimony.

3. The Right to Be Heard.

Victims have the right to make an oral or written Victim Impact Statement to the sentencing Judge. The statement may address the financial, physical, and psychological impact of the crime, as well as a sentencing recommendation. The Victim Witness Advocate can assist with the preparation of the Victim Impact Statement prepared and presented by the Assistant District Attorney to the court. A Victim Impact Statement Form is **attached**.

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