

Please Support SB22-057
Brain Injury Support for Survivors of Violent Crimes in the Criminal Justice System
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Background

- Brain injuries can be very consequential and long-lasting types of injuries for survivors of crimes, but are still imperfectly understood – awareness is needed
- In a small study at DU, nearly 100% of survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) reported being struck in the head, and 4/5 reported alterations in consciousness as a result
- Brain injuries are associated with changes in emotions and behaviors and can lead to behavioral health conditions such as depression
- Survivors of brain injuries may have reduced ability to advocate for themselves and seek treatment – due to the nature of the injury itself
- The general assembly twice approved brain injury related legislation in 2021
 - HB21-1165 – assistance for victims of strangulation – an anoxic brain injury
 - SB21-138 – brain injury screening pilot in DOC to reduce recidivism

Goals

- **2022** – create a task force comprised of subject matter experts to bring recommendations to the general assembly by 1/1/2023 – in time for further legislation action next year
- **2023** – launch a pilot program for screening survivors of violent crimes for brain injuries
 - Task force will evaluate key questions such as which entities should be responsible for conducting the screenings; privacy issues; role out of outside entities to deliver services
 - These key questions could not be sufficiently resolved in time for the 2022 legislation session so the goal of SB22-057 is to allow subject matter experts to further consider them
- **Beyond** – assess data & results of pilot program and evaluate ways to scale up services for survivors of violent crimes who may have experienced brain injuries

Section by Section Summary

1. Legislative Declaration – stating data about prevalence of brain injury, consequences of brain injury, goals of this legislation
2. Core of the bill – create new statute adjacent to VRA and crime victim support statutes defining terms, setting up & charging the brain injury task force, and setting a timeline
3. Safety clause – so the work of the task force can begin as soon as possible