

RESOLUTION**A RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY OF DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA TO THE DEKALB COUNTY DELEGATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR VICTIM ADVOCATE SERVICES IN THE COUNTY JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND FOR OTHER LAWFUL PURPOSES**

WHEREAS, the Governing Authority of DeKalb County requests that the DeKalb Delegation of the General Assembly support legislation that provides funding for Victim Advocate Services in the County Judicial System; and,

WHEREAS, DeKalb County's District Attorney's Office and the Solicitor General's Office operate the Victim-Witness Assistance (VWAP) Program, which provides victims with an advocate that offers guidance, support, information, and opportunities for referrals to appropriate resources within the criminal judicial process; and,

WHEREAS, advocates also ensure that crime victims understand their rights, as outlined in the Crime Victims Bill of Rights and State of Georgia law, and assist with obtaining appropriate care, procedural notices, support in obtaining restitution and compensation through the Criminal Justice System, at the expense of local jurisdictions; and,

WHEREAS, currently DeKalb County District Attorney's Office relies solely on available Federal grants and local funding, and the Solicitor General's Office relies heavily on local funding to provide adequate representation and support to VWAP participants; and,

WHEREAS, the Coronavirus Pandemic has highlighted the increased need of witness Victim Assistance Programs, and the increased number of criminal court cases in which all aspects of available resources provided by DeKalb Judicial System, including VWAP, are strained; this causes victims unnecessary harm through an elongated process, exposing victims to retaliation from perpetrators.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the governing authority of DeKalb County, Georgia, the following is requested:

1. The General Assembly to begin providing funding for prosecution-based Victim Advocate programs throughout the State;
2. The General Assembly consult with Prosecuting Attorney's Council ("PAC") and the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council ("CJCC") to establish a state-wide Victim Advocate Program Database, that identifies the needs of individual judicial circuits;
3. The General Assembly pass legislation that designates a yearly minimum funding allocation for local Victim Assistance programs from the State which will ensure that prosecution offices, through funding allocated by PAC, can provide the

constitutional and statutory services in accordance with the Victims Bill of Rights, to include funding for at least one (1) victim advocate per judicial circuit;

4. State funding should be sufficient enough to support staffing requirements, staffing pay and benefits, the ability to continue providing necessary programs and services and, meet equipment or other facility needs for prosecution-based Victim Advocate programs; and
5. The Executive Assistant or designee deliver a copy of this resolution to each member of the Georgia General Assembly representing a portion of DeKalb County.

ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioners of DeKalb County, this _____ day of _____, 2021.

STEPHEN R. BRADSHAW
Presiding Officer
Board of Commissioners
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED by the Chief Executive Officer of DeKalb County, this _____ day of _____, 2021.

MICHAEL L. THURMOND
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

BARBARA NORWOOD-SANDERS, CCC
Clerk to the Board of Commissioners and
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

VIVIANE H. ERNSTES
County Attorney