

AN ACT concerning civil law.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Crime Victims Compensation Act is amended by adding Section 18.5 as follows:

(740 ILCS 45/18.5 new)

Sec. 18.5. Restrictions on collection of debts incurred by crime victims.

(a) Within 10 business days after the filing of a claim, the Office of the Attorney General shall issue an applicant a written notice of the crime victim compensation claim and inform the applicant that the applicant may provide a copy of the written notice to vendors to have debt collection activities cease while the claim is pending.

(b) An applicant may provide a copy of the written notice to a vendor waiting for payment of a related debt. A vendor that receives notice of the filing of a claim under this Act with the Court of Claims must cease all debt collection activities against the applicant for a related debt. A vendor that assists an applicant to complete or submit an application for compensation or a vendor that submits a bill to the Office of the Attorney General has constructive notice of the filing of the claim and must not engage in debt collection activities

against the applicant for a related debt. If the Court of Claims awards compensation for the related debt, a vendor shall not engage in debt collection activities while payment is pending. If the Court of Claims denies compensation for a vendor's bill for the related debt or a portion thereof, the vendor may not engage in debt collection activities until 45 days after the date of an order of the Court of Claims denying compensation in whole or in part.

(c) A vendor that has notice of a compensation claim may:

(1) submit a written request to the Court of Claims for notification of the Court's decision involving a related debt. The Court of Claims shall provide notification of payment or denial of payment within 30 days of its decision;

(2) submit a bill for a related debt to the Office of the Attorney General; and

(3) contact the Office of the Attorney General to inquire about the status of the claim.

(d) The statute of limitations for collection of a related debt is tolled upon the filing of the claim with the Court of Claims and all civil actions in court against the applicant for a related debt shall be stayed until 45 days after the Court of Claims enters an order denying compensation for the related debt or portion thereof.

(e) As used in this Section:

(1) "Crime victim" means a victim of a violent crime or

an applicant as defined in this Act.

(2) "Debt collection activities" means:

(A) communicating with, harassing, or intimidating the crime victim for payment, including, but not limited to, repeatedly calling or writing to the crime victim and threatening to refer the related debt to a debt collection agency or to an attorney for collection, enforcement, or the filing of other process;

(B) contacting a credit ratings agency or distributing information to affect the crime victim's credit rating as a result of the related debt;

(C) referring a bill, or portion thereof, to a collection agency or attorney for collection action against the crime victim; or

(D) taking any other action adverse to the crime victim or his or her family on account of the related debt.

"Debt collection activities" does not include billing insurance or other government programs, routine inquiries about coverage by private insurance or government programs, or routine billing that indicates that the amount is not due pending resolution of the crime victim compensation claim.

(3) "Related debt" means a debt or expense for hospital, medical, dental, or counseling services incurred

by or on behalf of a crime victim as a direct result of the crime.

(4) "Vendor" includes persons, providers of service, vendors' agents, debt collection agencies, and attorneys hired by a vendor.