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Good morning. My name is Pamela Grosh. For the last six and one half years, I have worked with victims of crime in the Lancaster County District Attorney's Office. During this time I have walked the criminal justice path with many victims and their families.

Their stories are all unique. Each one has its own pain. Each person struggles with the everyday realities of living in the aftermath of a crime. Those realities are physical, in the loss of abilities once taken for granted, psychological, with a overwhelming range of emotions that deluge at unexpected moments, and financial, with a fist full of unanticipated expenses.

They are not all big moments. From victims who have given me the gift of looking into their souls, I understand that it is the constantness of these realities that is the most painful. As one mother said of her murdered child, "She's the first thing I think of when I open my eyes in the morning and the last thing I think of before I close them at night."

While each of the stories are unique, many elements of crime victims' quests are similar. Each of them seek to make sense of an event that is inherently senseless. They seek some level of understanding that will enable them to live without the constant cry of "WHY?". Many of them hope for these answers within the criminal justice system. They attend hearings and trials with incredibly painful testimony in order to facilitate their own search for the truth about what has happened. Having sought and found whatever facts a trial can offer, victims and their families are deeply affected by a favorable verdict. While nothing can erase the crime, a verdict and a sentence do close a chapter for them. They are satisfied with the feeling that justice has been exacted, a sentence has been pronounced, and the world has recognized the wrong that has been done.

However, the process is far from over. Many victims and their families enter this phase of the system with a complete unawareness of its existence. Prosecutors, police, and advocates are loath to make even the most general prediction of a case outcome. Everyone focuses on the trial and the verdict. There is no room for information about post sentencing rights of the victim. Many victims and their families expend a great deal of energy in the trial process and hope intensely that life will once again be normal when it is done. That hope is seldom realized.

Recognizing that the impact of a crime does not end with the sentencing of a defendant, despite a victim's fervent hopes, is the first step toward understanding the importance of the input process. A victim's physical, psychological and financial healing is not on the same timetable as a defendant's sentence. As many victims have expressed they would gladly serve the determined time of a prison sentence than live within the life sentence of a victimization. It is important that the most fundamental reasons why the defendant is in prison do not get lost within the quagmire of reports. Those reasons nearly always involve people, victims who have not forgotten. *My note in the system notes providing information about existence. Encourage them. One involvement*

Victims and their families need information. Being a crime victim is often an exercise in powerlessness. Others are in control of a situation that most intensely impacts you. People in this situation struggle to respond appropriately. Sometimes they may be simply to overwhelmed, tired or discouraged to respond to requests for a meeting with yet another stranger, or a letter with another detailing of their most private pain. That should not mean that their silence indicates disinterest. I believe that it is still important to notify victims of actions undertaken by the Board even if the victim chooses not to participate in the input process. *I also believe that it would be useful to offer a choice at the time of a consideration. I also believe that it would be valuable to consider a merger*

In many ways, these reforms address the most basic considerations that judges consider each time they sentence a defendant; the harm to the victim, the character of the defendant, and the risk to the community. These concepts should certainly not be lost just because an defendant has completed a fixed amount of time. While many factors must be considered in the release equation, these are too important to ever neglect.

*when first asked- people vs. process
while process is important the people
while Bill addresses process, it does in
Confidentiality-*