

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

A Report of First National Symposium on Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution, held on July 27, 1998, in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania

Mary Achilles, Symposium Organizer and Editor

Published by the Corrections Committee of the National Organization for Victim Assistance

Copyright 1999, *NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR VICTIM ASSISTANCE*®

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

Contents

Introduction	5
Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol	9
I. Information about the Appeals Process at the Time of Sentencing	9
II. Victim Involvement in the the Decision to Seek the Death Penalty	9
III. Registering Contact Information of Survivors	9
IV. Prior to Contacting the Survivor	9
V. Contacting the Survivor	10
VI. Preparing the Victim	10
VII. Post-Execution De-Briefing and Follow-up Contact	15
VIII. Link to Advocates in the Prosecutor’s Office	15
IX. Program Elements	16
X. Media Issues	17

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

Introduction

John H. Stein, Deputy Director
National Organization for Victim Assistance

The Evolution of Victim Rights

In the early 1980s, when crime victims first began seeking the right to be informed of, and present, and heard to critical stages of the criminal justice process, they seized on a prototype – the “Victim Impact Statement” – invented almost a decade earlier by James Rowland, then the Chief Probation Officer of Fresno County, California. The original aim of the impact statement was to give the sentencing court objective information on the financial, physical, psychological, and social costs of the crime on its victim. To underscore its objectivity, it was prepared by a different probation officer than the one preparing a pre-sentence report on the offender.

While the original impact statement was well received by victims, in short order a number of them won permission to write to the sentencing court directly, and then to address the court (and the offender) in person at the hearing. In time, what had started as administrative innovations became codified in law – indeed, by 1999, in constitutional amendments in the majority of states – and this form of “victim participation” became the bedrock upon which the jurisprudence of “victim rights” has been built. Its twin precepts – present and heard – call for the victim to have the opportunity observe all the proceedings, and then to offer testimony at key decision points.

In the same way as victim impact statements evolved from courtesies to rights, so did they work their way into other key decisions in the justice system: to hearings on bail, and negotiated guilty pleas, and parole, and on the revocation of probation and parole. For most participating victims, these opportunities to be heard constitute the essence of personalized justice; for many of their advocates, the perceived benefits for victims are primarily psychological, helping them on the path of “getting better.” However the benefits of participation are described, they are extremely important by victims.

At least twice, the advocates who championed the victim’s right “to be informed of, present, and heard at critical stages of the process” (to use the most common formulation of this principle) overlooked a “stage” that some victims considered critical indeed. The first was the hearing process whereby one-time defendants found not guilty by reason of insanity were considered for release from mental health institutions. In Maryland, where the issue first arose, the omission was later cured by the legislature, as it has been elsewhere. The second omission, also brought to victim advocates’ attention by affected crime victims, was the procedure whereby a death sentence was executed. In that arena, too, states that permit the use of the death penalty are beginning to open the doors of their death chambers’ witness room to the surviving relatives of the victims for whom the ultimate sanction is being conducted.

Victim Rights in the Ultimate Sanction

The logic of permitting survivors of homicide victims to witness an execution flows directly from the core principles of victim rights. It is a logic that no known victim advocates, even those who strongly oppose the death penalty, have challenged. That is hardly surprising: the reason that victim assistance professionals call

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

themselves “advocates” is that the victims they work with have consistently taught us that a respect for their humanity and dignity is on every crime victim’s short list of legitimate needs, and thus, to be a victim helper is necessarily to become a victim advocate.

As homicide survivors began asserting that they wanted to witness executions, and as their assertions began to be honored, either as a matter of policy or law, the community of victim advocates appreciated the gravity of that event in the victims’ lives. Unquestionably, the execution itself had great potential for bringing crisis upon the victims, and the help of a victim advocate could make a major difference in whether the experience was positive or negative. But whether there was a victim advocate to reach out to such victims was an uncertain proposition, and whether that advocate had a plan on how to be an effective helper before, during, and after the execution was chancier still.

The principle compiler of this report, Mary Achilles, felt unprepared for the resumption of executions in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, where she serves as the Victim Advocate for the Department of Corrections and of the Board of Probation and Parole. True, she had persuaded decision-makers to permit survivors to witness executions, which seemed likely to recur in a year or two, but that did not resolve how she was going to conduct herself as the person who would be responsible for contacting the affected family members and helping them make an informed decision, and then in serving as their counselor/advocate if they chose to witness the execution. Her prior career as director of the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Victim/Witness office, where she had worked with such families in homicide prosecutions, only reinforced her belief that she needed to learn how to do this assignment well. So she began a nationwide search for colleagues who had worked with survivors in these circumstances, and through phone calls and correspondence, began to feel reasonably prepared for the job ahead.

At the same time, she felt the need for that circle of specialists to get together, face to face, to find consensus on the best practices in serving in this role. Not only would that be useful to the participants, it might also lead to the creation of materials for colleagues in other states facing the same responsibilities. As a member of the Board of Directors of the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) and chair of its Corrections Committee, Ms. Achilles felt strongly that the informal group she assembled should be of service to the wider victims’ movement; all its members and collaborators agreed.

That was the genesis of the first National Symposium on Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution. Its sponsors were the National Institute of Corrections, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, and the Pennsylvania Office of the Victim Advocate. It was held on July 27, 1998, at the Department of Corrections Training Academy in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania. Although it proved not to need one, I was the designated facilitator for the symposium.

The following individuals, representing five states, participated in this symposium: Fay Dunning and Cathy Guessford from the Victim Services section of the Delaware Department of Corrections; Marilyn Baldwin from the Victim/Witness Appeal’s Division, Cook County District Attorney’s Office in Chicago, Illinois; Dora Larson with the Victim Services Unit of the Illinois Department of Corrections; Karin Ho and Lynn Iannarelli in the Office of Victim Services of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction; Sandy Wofford in the South Carolina Attorney General’s Office; Pamela Grosh in Victim/Witness Services program of Lancaster,

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

Pennsylvania; Secretary Martin F. Horn and Mary Beth Marschik of the Pennsylvania Department of Correction; and from the Pennsylvania Office of the Victim Advocate, Mary Achilles, Missy King, Carron Mabin, Kathy Buckley and Victoria Sostack. Many individuals that were unable to attend sent informational materials to be reviewed and included in the discussion.

The recurring issues that arose were:

- The need for a written national protocol on how to prepare for and undertake such a process;
- The need for a videotaped documentary of victims who have witnessed an execution, as a service to victims and advocates who face decisions about similarly participating in an execution; and
- Support to victim advocates in the delivery of these services.

The first two concerns are answered in this report and in an accompanying videotape. The last concern is only partially addressed by those products.

Most of the victim services staff in attendance voiced concern about the isolation they felt in providing this service to crime victims. The symposium itself seemed to serve as a support mechanism. It was clear that providing services to crime victims around their choice to witness an execution is one of the most challenging that we have encountered. Clearly this group felt the need to continue the dialogue.

That is also *your* job. By “you,” we mean the victim advocate who makes use of this protocol – a staff member of a corrections department, an advocate working for a prosecutor or an Attorney General, or a participant in a homicide survivors’ support group, among others. (And if your state does not have a designated advocate to work with survivors affected by executions, put that issue on your advocacy to-do list.)

The protocol itself makes for straightforward reading – but using it can be very difficult and distressing. One resource for equipping yourself for this task is the “Stress Reactions of Caregivers” chapter in NOVA’s *Community Crisis Response Team Training Manual*, available at the Web site of the U.S. Justice Department’s Office for Victims of Crime: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc, then select “Information Resources,” then “Publications.”

The following protocol was developed not only from the members in attendance at the symposium, but also colleagues throughout the nation. We are grateful to them all, and hope that our collective advice proves helpful.

The whole enterprise has been guided by these ethical precepts: that any jurisdiction that provides for capital punishment as a possible sanction for murder should require “public witnesses” at any execution; that such jurisdictions should invite surviving relatives of the murder victim to be among those public witnesses; and accompanying that offer should be the provision of help by trained victim advocates.

For further assistance, contact:

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

Mary Achilles, Victim Advocate
Office of the Victim Advocate
Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole
1101 South Front Street Suite 5200
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105
(717) 783-8185
Fax: (717) 787-0867
machilles@@pbpp.state.pa.us

Alternatively, you can contact me:

John Stein, Deputy Director
National Organization for Victim Assistance
1757 Park Road, N.W.
Washington, DC 20010
(202) 232-6682
Fax: (202) 462-2255
nova@try-nova.org
www.try-nova.org

In adopting as its own this protocol and its accompanying videotape, the NOVA Board of Directors wanted to reaffirm a long-standing position regarding the underlying issue of the death penalty. Accordingly, at its August 4, 2000, meeting, the Board adopted the following resolution:

“The National Organization for Victim Assistance supports broad rights and services for crime victims, and the expansion of options and avenues by which victims are able to have their rights enforced and services provided. Additionally, NOVA recognizes that there are some issues which may be related to, or impact, victims or victim service professionals, but which are outside the mission of NOVA or the basic rights for victims. In some instances there is honest and deep divergence of beliefs and opinions among victims and victim service providers on these issues. It continues to be the policy of NOVA to not take positions on issues of this nature.

“The death penalty is such an issue. In developing and distributing the following video, NOVA is continuing its ‘no position’ policy on the death penalty. The video is authorized in the context of victim choices, quality victim services, and victim service professional training.

“[Title of video]” deals with victim/survivors’ participation in witnessing executions. The development and distribution of this video is intended to reinforce NOVA’s commitment and support for a victims’ right to have choice in their role and input at all stages of the criminal justice process. NOVA also supports the need for victim service professionals to be respected in their personal beliefs, ethics, and opinions in providing services to victims of crime.”

A final word, exercising the prerogatives of the facilitator (and volunteered editor and typesetter): all of us

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

engaged in this enterprise took pleasure in each other's company and value each other's support. We especially appreciate the institutional support that made the symposium possible and inspired our follow-on work: thank you, National Institute of Corrections, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, and Pennsylvania Office of the Victim Advocate.

Subsequent institutional support, with a seed-money grant to produce the videotape, came from the Delaware Office of the Attorney General. Our thanks to M. Jane Brady, Delaware's Attorney General.

Marilyn Baldwin was Mary Achilles' first mentor in her search for how to do it right; characteristically, Mary then recruited Marilyn to take charge of the videotape project, who in turn persuaded Candee Productions to produce the tape, largely on speculation. Thank you, Candee, for your goodwill, and Marilyn for your fine work.

At the top of our pyramid of thanks is Mary Achilles, who got more out of us than we anticipated, and put more into the project than anyone. We believe that the protocol and videotape will alleviate suffering, and our pride in contributing to it is more than matched by our admiration for Mary, who made it happen. Thank you, Czarina.

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

I. INFORMATION AT THE TIME OF SENTENCING ABOUT THE APPEALS PROCESS

After the offender is sentenced, it is important for the family to experience some down time. Information regarding the years of appeals and warrants should be available upon request immediately. But if not requested, a few months should pass before they are contacted and given all verbal and written information regarding the long road to the execution day. Information on any corrections-based program to assist victims in this process should be provided.

II. VICTIM INVOLVEMENT IN THE DECISION TO SEEK THE DEATH PENALTY

Current victim rights laws do not require victims to be consulted over charging decisions, and that includes the decision to seek the death penalty. The decision is made by the prosecutor's office based on relevant state statutes. Any such consultation that does occur is at the prosecutor's discretion.

III. REGISTERING CONTACT INFORMATION OF SURVIVORS

- A. Victims in future cases: Develop a protocol with the state prosecutors' association so that in every death penalty case, a local victim service provider will routinely give the family, soon after sentencing, all available information on the victim's right to witness an execution and where to register in order to be contacted at the appropriate time.
- B. Victims in existing (or old) cases
 - 1. Several states have identified all of their death row cases and identified the victims and survivors for purpose of contacting them to explore their interest in attending the execution.
 - 2. Using a roster of inmates under a death sentence, methods to identify the victims and locate their survivors include: county victim assistance programs, prosecutors' offices, newspaper articles (library), church records, funeral home records, police records, Internet searches, telephone directories.

IV. PRIOR TO CONTACTING THE SURVIVOR

- A. Familiarize yourself with the facts of the case, who the victim was, and what relationship this survivor is to the victim.
- B. Know the status of the execution case, especially, if possible, the status of any appeals. If this information is not directly available to you, be sure that you know the name and telephone number of the

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

person that can give that information to the victim.

- C. Maintain complete records on your contacts with the victim. Many situations involve a variety of surviving family members and various relationships to the deceased. There may also be surviving victims of crime other than murder that may be participating. Keeping clear and complete records will assist in the delivery of services.
- D. Know the law or policy in your state that outlines victim witnessing an execution. It is important that victims are clear on what their rights are – which rights are legally binding and which are simply a matter of policy; there should be no surprises.
- E. Be familiar with the layout of the death chamber. Take a tour. Watch and participate in the execution drills run by the Department of Corrections.
- F. Know the clemency and commutation process in the state and what role, if any, the victims' family can have in the process.
- G. Learn how this process normally impacts on the preparation for the execution.
- H. Have working knowledge of the appellate process in the state – plus the filing of habeas corpus petitions – and be able to explain that to the victim.

V. CONTACTING THE SURVIVOR

Contacting survivors as early as possible provides a variety of benefits including: affording staff time to build a relationship with the survivors; re-associating them with the prosecutor's office or connecting them with the office that can keep them abreast of the appellate process; and beginning the long and detailed preparation process for victims.

- A. Contact should be made in person or by telephone. Some suggested steps in contacting the victims are: identifying yourself to the victims as a victim advocate and explaining that you will be their primary contact during this process; notifying them of their rights under the law; offering your services and those of your office, the Department of Corrections, or whomever is participating in this project with you.

Many states contact the victim via letter with an information brochure and indicate in the letter that they will follow up with a phone call.

- B. If the first contact is at the time of a scheduled execution, a written contact should accompany the phone contact to ensure that the victim has the information needed on date, time, and place of the execution.

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

- C. First contact with the victim should be made, when possible, prior to the scheduling of the execution. This is often an emotionally-charged issue for the victim and for staff. There is a need to build a trusting relationship between the surviving victim and the victim advocate for the effective delivery of services. The more briefing on the process and preparation of the victim that can be done the better.
- D. Set up a meeting for family members and their support person (friend, relative, clergy, police officer, etc.). Other individuals to include in the meeting are: representative from the prosecutors office, representative from the Attorney General's office, representative from the Department of Corrections, victim advocate, attorney working on the case and a victim who has already witnessed an execution, whenever possible.

Some states have organized this meeting into a presentation before a larger group of victims such a homicide support group or victims called together for this purpose.

- E. Key points to discuss with the victim survivor are as follows:
 - Stress that they are not alone. All of the people listed above (who are, one hopes, at the meeting) are working to make this experience as meaningful as it can be and with the least amount of distress to them as possible.
 - Make them aware that there is no right or wrong choice. It is completely up to them whether they attend the execution. They always have the right to change their mind right up to the last minute.
 - Encourage them not to make the execution day the focus of their lives. There are years of appeals between sentencing and execution.

VI. PREPARING THE VICTIM

First contact with the victim should be made, whenever possible, prior to the scheduling of the execution.

A. Logistical preparation

1. Provide the survivor with an opportunity to tour the death chamber prior to the execution date.

Some states have organized tours for groups of victims or organizations such as Parents of Murdered Children and homicide support groups.

2. Be clear with survivors as to the rules and regulations of the operation of the prison, particularly as to the security measures and what visitors can and cannot bring into a prison setting.

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

Some states have developed an informational brochure that includes this information.

3. Obtain and relay from an experienced practitioner how the appellate process will impact the scheduled execution.
4. Review and relay your state's available methods of execution.
5. Obtain and relay from an experienced physician the physical reactions of the inmate that can be expected according to the particular method of execution.
6. Be prepared to give any and all information that is not deemed confidential about the process of preparing the inmate for execution.
7. Many victims are curious about the last few days or hours of the inmate's life. See if the Corrections Department is willing to give the survivors a briefing on that subject.
8. Specify what kind of support person can accompany the victim into the institution and what needs to be done to get this person into the prison.
9. Specify who can accompany the victim into the actual viewing room of the death chamber.
10. Explain who else will the victim expect to encounter: corrections staff, inmates, the inmate's family, media, protesters, etc.
11. Show where the waiting area is in relation to the death chamber.
12. Explain who will escort them to the viewing room of the death chamber.
13. Describe who else will be in the viewing area.
14. Specify whether the victim's attendance is confidential.
15. Review in detail the steps to be taken to conduct the execution, and put these into a timeframe.
16. Show where the victims will be in relation to other civilian witnesses, the inmate's family, and inmate witnesses.
17. Describe how the victim will be escorted out of the viewing area.
18. Show where the media will be located, and whether that site will put them in contact with the victims.
19. Show where the victims will be paced after leaving the chamber in relation to other witnesses.

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

20. Be prepared to answer these questions: Is the inmate able to make a public statement? How? When?

B. Emotional preparation (pre-execution briefing):

Emotional preparation of the victim is crucial to ensuring that this is a positive experience. Identification of expectations and possible outcomes should be the primary focus of the pre-execution briefing. Pre-execution briefing can and should occur as early in the process as possible. Pre-execution briefings can occur continuously over a long period of time. The decision to witness an execution is significant and challenging. The more preparation the survivor has prior to the event, the greater the likelihood that it will have the meaning they intend. The issues listed below are common themes that we see survivors experience.

1. ***Old hurts and wounds:*** As most of us who work in corrections-based or post-sentencing victim services know, we will need to address all of the injustices that have been experienced by these victims. Working with victims at the back-end of the system involves dealing with the feelings that victims have about their experience of justice and their treatment by the system to date.
2. ***Right to choose:*** It is important to affirm the victims' right to choose to participate in, or back out of, at any time during the process right up to the last minute entering the death chamber viewing area. This is a personal and private decision, and may be right for some and not for others. Be sure that the operations of the prison include the option of a last-minute decision not to be a witness.
3. ***Accompaniment and support:*** Victims should know that they have the option of having someone on the premises – but not normally in the death chamber itself – to provide support before and after the execution. Since witnessing a death is not a natural human event, we encourage victims to bring a support person at least for the ride home so that they will not be alone. The support person could be another family member, a volunteer advocate, and the like.
4. ***Living with the decision:*** preparation should include a discussion with victims about the support – or lack of support – they have from family and friends in their decision to witness the execution. What do they think strangers will say about their decision? Executions carry with them much public and media interest. Victims need to know that they may encounter others who will publicly disapprove of their decision to witness the execution. They need to think about the possible reactions of others and ways that they can deal with that effectively.
5. ***Reconciliation of values:*** victims need to recognize that they may be dealing with a dichotomy of values and that they may encounter some laborious work in reconciling them. Religious practice and questions of faith can pose great challenges to finding the right path to a decision for a particular victim.

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

6. **“Predict and prepare”**: it is important to stress to survivors that witnessing an execution is very unlikely to be cure-all. In many cases, the survivors experience a let-down. Some may feel that the offender’s death (in case of lethal injection) was too humane, too easy, or anti-climatic. It is wise to explore all this before the execution as a “prediction and preparation” service, always framed in terms of, “You may not be able to predict what your own reactions will be, but I understand that many people who have gone through this say ¼”
7. **Lower expectations**: from the outset of your dealings with them, you should encourage family members to focus on their own healing as opposed to the expecting total relief on that “magical” day when the defendant is put to death. In some instances, people will feel tremendous relief and find closure – but not always. This is a long, painful journey, and sometimes, when the execution is completed, the pain is not reduced – and for many, the journey does not end with the sentence being carried out. In that situation, survivors may be able to take comfort in the fact that the defendant most likely will never be released from prison.

VII. POST-EXECUTION DE-BRIEFING AND FOLLOW-UP CONTACT

A. Immediately after the execution

1. **Moment of silence**: Planning and using a moment of silence after the pronouncement of death is a helpful way to transition into the “after-the-execution” phase. The moment of silence should be stated to be in memory of the victim or victims, reciting their full names.
2. Remain in the institution for a period of time in a private area where the victim can reunite with family members and supporters.
3. Victims should be afforded the opportunity to go to local hotel where a room is set up for them to debrief. There should be coffee and light refreshments. They could then be given the opportunity to return to their own private room, go home, or join in a group debriefing discussion. Victims may change whatever tentative decisions they may have made beforehand, and all their supporters should be made aware of that.

B. Another follow-up contact should occur within one to two weeks of the execution. The following could be used as a guide in the follow-up contact:

1. Have them describe the execution from their perspective.
2. Ask them to describe what they saw. Do they have any other special sensory memories (taste, touch, sound, or smell)?
3. What were their immediate reactions?
4. What were their reactions and responses in just after the execution? And between that time and

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

- your present conversation with them?
5. Were there expectations met?
 6. Are they experiencing any reactions or responses they did not expect?
 7. If the victims are experiencing any distress, explore with them ways in which they can manage those reactions. What activities might improve the situation? What people would they like to talk to?
 8. Get in touch with other survivors who did not witness the execution to see if they need support.

VIII. LINK TO ADVOCATES IN THE PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

A. Prosecutor's office resources

1. In almost every prosecutor's office in the country, there is a victim advocate. If there is not a local advocate in the county in which the crime took place, try the Attorney General's office.
2. In most states, the Attorney General's office works with the local prosecutor's office that tried the case. In a few larger offices, the prosecutor will have a victim advocate who specializes in appellate cases. If not, work with the general victim advocate, although in larger offices, there may be an advocate specializing in working on homicide cases. Find out what services their office offers and set up a meeting.

B. Other options

1. If none of the above is an option, have the supervisor of criminal appeals for that prosecutor's office – or the Attorney General's office, if it handles all death penalty appeals – put you in touch with the attorneys assigned to the case.
2. Usually, there will be a team of lawyers assigned to deal with those appeals up to the day of execution; they will also be the state's lawyers at any clemency hearing.

C. Procedures

1. Set up a meeting with these local and state prosecutors, the family members, and yourself. If, as is most likely, you are a victim advocate in the corrections department, bring in another departmental representative involved with death penalty executions.
2. First, establish that this is a gathering of people committed to seeing the sentence carried out and making the process as meaningful for, and with the least amount of trauma to, the survivors.

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

3. Often family members feel that no one is on their side – that no one cares because the crime took place so many years ago. So first, develop trust and express compassion. Then, go through a detailed explanation of the appeals process and what to expect during any clemency hearing and the execution itself.

IX. PROGRAM ELEMENTS

A. Structure

1. Written policies and procedures on victims as witnesses to an execution should be incorporated into corrections department's policies on execution procedures. Staff assigned to the execution procedures are usually formed into teams; the victim advocate should be assigned to all of these teams.
2. Plan for pre- and post-execution de-briefing of staff.

B. Staff training issues

1. NOVA Community Crisis Response Training
2. Tour of the prison which houses the death chamber and the death chamber itself.
3. Victim services staff observation of a corrections department execution drill.
4. Conversations with survivors who have witnessed an execution and those who have chosen not to witness.
5. Knowledge of state laws regarding executions as to a survivor's right to witness an execution.
6. Bibliography: executions and victims as witnesses to an execution.

C. Activities and products requiring resources

1. Information brochure and other written materials for victims.
2. Videotape of the death chamber for staff and victims.
3. Communication equipment – a cell phone or beeper – if staff must travel a distance to the prison which houses the death chamber.
4. Written travel directions for victims.
5. Funding for overnight lodging, meals, and the like for victims and supporters.

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol

6. The expenses involved to connect victims who have witnessed an execution and those who have not as volunteers to talk with those making the decision.
7. Support group or network for victims who have witnessed an execution.

X. MEDIA ISSUES

- A. It is important that the survivor be given the *choice* to speak to the media.
- B. The victim advocate should be prepared to explain the policies of the corrections department and other criminal justice agencies involved in the execution/appeals process. The victim advocate should, at the request of the survivors, be their spokesperson with the media.
- C. One point of contact should be established through which all media request to interview the victim should be channeled.
- D. The victim should be afforded the opportunity to present the media with a written or oral statement after the execution.
- E. The victim advocate should try various resources to get familiar with relevant victim rights laws in general and in that state; the Website of the National Center for Victims of Crime can help: www.ncvc.org.
- F. State law should include confidentiality protection for victims who choose to witness and execution.
- G. Victim advocates should develop a plan for shielding victims from the media should they request it, using local resources within the prosecutors office and the local police whenever necessary.

Crime Victims as Witnesses to an Execution: A National Protocol