



# PRESS RELEASE

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## Governor and Commissioner Announce MDOC Division of Victim Services

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**Jackson** — Governor Ronnie Musgrove and Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) Commissioner Robert Johnson today announced the creation of the Division of Victim Services within MDOC. This new division will offer victims of crime information on inmates that will hopefully provide them some relief.

“This is another first for Mississippi that will truly help our people who have been the victims of crime, although it is unfortunate any Mississippians will need this help,” said Governor Musgrove. “This new division puts victims first and offers victims of crime a voice in the state’s correctional system.”

The Division of Victim Services (DVS) provides victims access to inmate information if the inmate is under the authority of MDOC. Many of the services provided to victims are outlined in the Crime Victims’ Bill of Rights, and include:

- Notification within 15 days prior to the end of the sentence of the inmate;
- Notice of release upon expiration of sentence or medical release; and
- Notice within 15 days after the prisoner has died if within MDOC custody.

The DVS will also provide referral services to victims with specific needs, such as counseling and support groups, information about the Crime Victim Compensation Program, crisis intervention and contacts with victim assistance organizations throughout the state. The DVS will also provide MDOC staff with victim sensitivity training.

“Having been in law enforcement for 28 years I have seen up close and personal the immediate impact crime has on victims,” said Commissioner Johnson. “I’ve also seen that the further along a prisoner gets into the criminal justice system, the less sensitized people are to the victim’s trauma. In many cases, corrections has no idea what the crime victim went through and that’s what I envision this division will help us correct.”

(more)

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DVS Director Tara Frazier has ten years experience in providing victim assistance. Frazier most recently served as the victim services officer with Mississippi Crime Victim Compensation Program. She has worked in other victim assistance organizations providing assistance to children and senior citizens. Frazier also has a corrections background having started her career as an MDOC correctional officer in 1988.

To receive assistance from DVS, victims must complete and return a notification form to MDOC. To receive a copy of the notification form, victims can call toll free at 1-866-522-4087 or victims can electronically complete and submit a notification form through the MDOC website, [www.mdoc.state.ms.us](http://www.mdoc.state.ms.us).

MDOC established the DVS in the fall of 2000 after receiving a Victims of Crime Act grant awarded by the Mississippi Department of Public Safety Planning through the U.S. Department of Justice.