

AN ACT

To amend Chapter 15 of Title 17 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to victim compensation, so as to increase the amount payable for funeral expenses; to enlarge the pool of claimants to include individuals related by marriage; to provide for related matters; to provide an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Chapter 15 of Title 17 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to victim compensation, is amended by revising subparagraph (a)(1)(E) and paragraph (1) of subsection (b) of Code Section 17-15-7, relating to persons eligible for awards, as follows:

"(E) Is a dependent spouse, parent, step-parent, child, or step-child of a person who is injured physically, who dies, or who suffers financial hardship as a result of being injured physically as a direct result of a crime;"

"(b)(1) Victims may be legal residents or nonresidents of this state. A surviving spouse, parent, step-parent, child, or step-child who is legally dependent for his or her principal support upon a deceased victim shall be entitled to file a claim under this chapter if the deceased victim would have been so entitled, regardless of the residence or nationality of the surviving spouse, parent, step-parent, child, or step-child."

SECTION 2.

Said chapter is further amended by revising paragraph (2) of subsection (c) and subsection (j) of Code Section 17-15-8, relating to required findings and amount of award, as follows:

"(2) No award under this chapter for the following losses shall exceed the maximum amount authorized:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Maximum Award</u>
Lost wages	\$ 10,000.00
Funeral expenses	6,000.00
Financial hardship or loss of support	10,000.00
Medical	15,000.00
Counseling	3,000.00
Crime scene sanitization	1,500.00"

"(j) In any case where a crime results in death, the spouse, parents, step-parents, children, step-children, siblings, or step-siblings of such deceased victim may be considered eligible for an award for the cost of psychological counseling which is deemed necessary as a direct result of said criminal incident. The maximum award for said counseling expenses shall not exceed \$3,000.00 for each claimant identified in this subsection."

SECTION 3.

This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

SECTION 4.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.