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**SB-1324 Crime victims: compensation for pecuniary loss.** (2015-2016)

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**Senate Bill No. 1324**

**CHAPTER 730**

An act to amend Section 13957.9 of the Government Code, relating to crime victims, and making an appropriation therefor.

[ Approved by Governor September 27, 2016. Filed with Secretary of State September 27, 2016. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SB 1324, Hancock. Crime victims: compensation for pecuniary loss.

Existing law generally provides for the reimbursement of victims and derivative victims of specified types of crimes by the California Victim Compensation Board from the Restitution Fund, a continuously appropriated fund, for specified losses suffered as a result of those crimes. Existing law, until January 1, 2017, authorizes the board to grant from the fund for pecuniary losses, when the board determines it will best aid the person seeking compensation, reimbursement for outpatient psychiatric, psychological, or other mental health counseling-related expenses incurred by the victim or derivative victim, as specified. Existing law sets forth eligibility requirements and limits on the amount of compensation the board may award, and requires the application for compensation to be verified under penalty of perjury.

This bill would extend the board's authority to grant reimbursement for those outpatient psychiatric, psychological, or other mental health counseling-related expenses until January 1, 2019. By expanding the authorization for the use of moneys in the Restitution Fund, a continuously appropriated fund, this bill would make an appropriation. Because an application for reimbursement is required to be submitted under penalty of perjury, this bill would expand the definition of a crime and thus impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Vote: 2/3 Appropriation: yes Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

**THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 1.** Section 13957.9 of the Government Code is amended to read:

**13957.9.** (a) In addition to the authorization provided in Section 13957 and subject to the limitations set forth in Section 13957.2, the board may grant for pecuniary loss, when the board determines it will best aid the person seeking compensation, reimbursement of the amount of outpatient psychiatric, psychological, or other mental health counseling-related expenses incurred by the victim or derivative victim, including peer counseling services provided by violence peer counseling services

provided by a service organization for victims of violent crime, and including family psychiatric, psychological, or mental health counseling for the successful treatment of the victim provided to family members of the victim in the presence of the victim, whether or not the family member relationship existed at the time of the crime, that became necessary as a direct result of the crime, subject to the following conditions:

(1) The following persons may be reimbursed for the expense of their outpatient mental health counseling in an amount not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000):

(A) A victim.

(B) A derivative victim who is the surviving parent, sibling, child, spouse, fiancé, or fiancée of a victim of a crime that directly resulted in the death of the victim.

(C) A derivative victim, as described in paragraphs (1) to (4), inclusive, of subdivision (c) of Section 13955, who is the primary caretaker of a minor victim whose claim is not denied or reduced pursuant to Section 13956 in a total amount not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for not more than two derivative victims.

(2) The following persons may be reimbursed for the expense of their outpatient mental health counseling in an amount not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000):

(A) A derivative victim not eligible for reimbursement pursuant to paragraph (1), provided that mental health counseling of a derivative victim described in paragraph (5) of subdivision (c) of Section 13955, shall be reimbursed only if that counseling is necessary for the treatment of the victim.

(B) A victim of a crime of unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor committed in violation of subdivision (d) of Section 261.5 of the Penal Code. A derivative victim of a crime committed in violation of subdivision (d) of Section 261.5 of the Penal Code shall not be eligible for reimbursement of mental health counseling expenses.

(C) A minor who suffers emotional injury as a direct result of witnessing a violent crime and who is not eligible for reimbursement of the costs of outpatient mental health counseling under any other provision of this chapter. To be eligible for reimbursement under this clause, the minor must have been in close proximity to the victim when he or she witnessed the crime.

(3) The board may reimburse a victim or derivative victim for outpatient mental health counseling in excess of that authorized by paragraph (1) or (2) or for inpatient psychiatric, psychological, or other mental health counseling if the claim is based on dire or exceptional circumstances that require more extensive treatment, as approved by the board.

(4) Expenses for psychiatric, psychological, or other mental health counseling-related services may be reimbursed only if the services were provided by either of the following individuals:

(A) A person who would have been authorized to provide those services pursuant to former Article 1 (commencing with Section 13959) as it read on January 1, 2002.

(B) A person who is licensed by the state to provide those services, or who is properly supervised by a person who is so licensed, subject to the board's approval and subject to the limitations and restrictions the board may impose.

(b) The total award to or on behalf of each victim or derivative victim may not exceed thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000), except that this amount may be increased to seventy thousand dollars (\$70,000) if federal funds for that increase are available.

(c) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) "Service organization for victims of violent crime" means a nonprofit and charitable organization that meets both of the following criteria:

(A) Its primary mission is to provide services to victims of violent crime.

(B) It provides programs or services to victims of violent crime and their families, and other programs, whether or not a similar program exists in an agency that provides additional services.

(2) "Violence peer counseling services" means counseling by a violence peer counselor for the purpose of rendering advice or assistance for victims of violent crime and their families. Any violence peer counseling services that fall under the scope of practice of the Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist Act (Chapter 13 (commencing with Section 4980) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code), the Educational Psychologist Practice Act (Chapter 13.5 (commencing with Section 4989.10) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code), the Clinical Social Worker Practice Act (Chapter 14 (commencing with Section 4991) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code), and the Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor Act

(Chapter 16 (commencing with Section 4999.10) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code), which are not performed in an exempt setting as defined in Sections 4980.01, 4996.14, and 4999.22 of the Business and Professions Code, shall only be performed by a licensee or a registrant of the Board of Behavioral Sciences or other appropriately licensed professional, such as a licensed psychologist or board certified psychiatrist.

(3) "Violence peer counselor" means a provider of supportive and nonpsychotherapeutic peer counseling services who is employed by a service organization for victims of violent crime, whether financially compensated or not, and who meets all of the following requirements:

(A) Possesses at least six months of full-time equivalent experience in providing peer support services acquired through employment, volunteer work, or as part of an internship experience.

(B) Completed a training program aimed at preparing an individual who was once a mental health services consumer to use his or her life experience with mental health treatment, combined with other strengths and skills, to promote the mental health recovery of other mental health services consumers who are in need of peer-based services relating to recovery as a victim of a violent crime.

(C) Possesses 40 hours of training on all of the following:

(i) The profound neurological, biological, psychological, and social effects of trauma and violence.

(ii) Peace-building and violence prevention strategies, including, but not limited to, conflict mediation and retaliation prevention related to gangs and gang-related violence.

(iii) Post-traumatic stress disorder and vicarious trauma, especially as related to gangs and gang-related violence.

(iv) Case management practices, including, but not limited to, ethics and victim compensation advocacy.

(D) When providing violence peer counseling services, is supervised by a marriage and family therapist licensed pursuant to Chapter 13 (commencing with Section 4980) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code, a licensed educational psychologist licensed pursuant to Chapter 13.5 (commencing with Section 4989.10) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code, a clinical social worker licensed pursuant to Chapter 14 (commencing with Section 4991) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code, or a licensed professional clinical counselor licensed pursuant to Chapter 16 (commencing with Section 4999.10) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code. For the purposes of this subparagraph, a licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed educational psychologist, licensed clinical social worker, or licensed professional clinical counselor shall be employed by the same service organization as the violence peer counselor.

(d) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2019, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that is enacted before January 1, 2019, deletes or extends that date.

**SEC. 2.** No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.