

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 899
By: Perry
Criminal Jurisprudence
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Current law entitles a victim, guardian of a victim, or close relative of a deceased victim to a number of rights within the criminal justice system relating to prosecution proceedings and the events leading up to the prosecution. These statutory provisions help protect the victim's, guardian's, or relative's privacy and safety and keep the victim and other such persons informed of the prosecution proceedings. Interested parties, including victim outreach programs, have expressed interest in expanding this list to provide additional privacy protections. To address these concerns, H.B. 899 expands the list of rights to which a victim of a capital felony or the victim's guardian or relative, as applicable, is entitled by granting such persons certain rights with respect to contact by a victim outreach specialist and the designation of a victim service provider to act as a liaison between the victim and the defense.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 899 amends the Code of Criminal Procedure to entitle a victim of a capital felony offense, a guardian of a victim of such offense, or a close relative of a deceased victim of such offense to the right to decline to be contacted by a victim outreach specialist if the contact is initiated by, or if the specialist is retained by, the defendant or the defendant's attorney; the right to designate a victim service provider to receive all communications from a victim outreach specialist acting on behalf of any person; and the right to have the attorney representing the state notify the defendant and the defendant's attorney of any decisions made relating to declining that contact or making such designation.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2013.