

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to victims of criminal offenses;  
3           amending s. 960.001, F.S.; providing that private  
4           counsel retained by a victim of a sexual offense may  
5           be present during victim depositions; providing an  
6           effective date.

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8   Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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10           Section 1. Paragraph (q) of subsection (1) of section  
11   960.001, Florida Statutes, is amended, to read:

12           960.001 Guidelines for fair treatment of victims and  
13   witnesses in the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems.—

14           (1) The Department of Legal Affairs, the state attorneys,  
15   the Department of Corrections, the Department of Juvenile  
16   Justice, the Florida Commission on Offender Review, the State  
17   Courts Administrator and circuit court administrators, the  
18   Department of Law Enforcement, and every sheriff's department,  
19   police department, or other law enforcement agency as defined in  
20   s. 943.10(4) shall develop and implement guidelines for the use  
21   of their respective agencies, which guidelines are consistent  
22   with the purposes of this act and s. 16(b), Art. I of the State  
23   Constitution and are designed to implement s. 16(b), Art. I of  
24   the State Constitution and to achieve the following objectives:

25           (q) *Presence of victim advocate during discovery*

26 | *deposition; testimony of victim of a sexual offense.*—At the  
27 | request of the victim or the victim's parent, guardian, or  
28 | lawful representative, private counsel retained by the victim,  
29 | and a ~~the~~ victim advocate designated by the state attorney's  
30 | office, sheriff's office, or municipal police department, or one  
31 | representative from a not-for-profit victim services  
32 | organization, including, but not limited to, rape crisis  
33 | centers, domestic violence advocacy groups, and alcohol abuse or  
34 | substance abuse groups, shall be permitted to attend and be  
35 | present during any deposition of the victim. The victim of a  
36 | sexual offense shall be informed of the right to have the  
37 | courtroom cleared of certain persons as provided in s. 918.16  
38 | when the victim is testifying concerning that offense.

39 | Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.