



State of North Carolina  
Department of Justice

*Roy Cooper, Attorney General*

July 13, 2009

The Honorable John Smith, Director  
Administrative Office of the Courts  
2 East Morgan Street  
Raleigh, N. C. 27601-1400

VIA: FAX and First Class Mail

RE: Crime Victim's Restitution

Dear Judge Smith:

Over the last ten years crime victims have not been first to receive restitution despite a state law that says they should. As the primary Senate sponsor of that legislation in 1998, I know the intent of the General Assembly was to put crime victims at the front of the line for restitution paid into the court by the criminals who harmed them.

This law, N.C.G.S. 7A-304(d)(1), was meant to make restitution for crime victims a priority, and I am pleased that the Administrative Office of the Courts has indicated that victims will be placed first in future cases. However, I am shocked that it appears that past crime victims have been forced to wait behind the government before getting the funds they deserve.

Just as important as setting future priorities is making it right for past crime victims. I urge the state to identify funds still owed to past victims and work to get them the restitution that wrongly went to the state. I am setting up a task force in my office of Victims and Citizens Services to help these crime victims receive their just compensation. We want to work with the Administrative Office of the Courts and the Clerks of Court to set up a process to get this done.

The Hon. John Smith  
July 13, 2009  
Page 2

Please feel free to call my director of Victims and Citizens Services, David Elliott, at 716-6780, or me if you have any questions. It is important that the state keep its word to the crime victims of North Carolina.

With kind regards, I am

Very truly yours,

  
Roy Cooper

cc: The Honorable Joe Hackney, Speaker  
N. C. House of Representatives

The Honorable Marc Basnight  
President Pro Tempore NC Senate

The Honorable Beverly Perdue, Governor  
State of North Carolina

The Honorable Sarah E. Parker, Chief Justice  
N. C. Supreme Court