

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.