

To Stop Violence, Plan Would Help Victims

By [Brian Mackey](#) • Jan 10, 2017

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Lobbyists Matt Jones, left, and Peter Baroni testify before a House committee with Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth.

Brian Mackey / NPR Illinois | 91.9 UIS

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As Chicago confronts an increasing murder rate, the Illinois legislature is trying to take on the root causes of violence in some of the state's most traumatized communities.

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Brian Mackey reports on the Illinois legislature's latest attempt to improve the state's criminal justice system.

Many people who commit crime started out as victims. And in some neighborhoods, this can lead to a cycle of trauma and retribution.

The plan is to address the role of trauma in criminal behavior, targeting high-risk, underserved communities. People would be on the ground, building relationships to help victims better deal with their grief and anger.

Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth is a Democrat from Peoria. Back in 2014, her stepson was shot to death. She says you never really recover from that kind of trauma, but it happened once.

"I couldn't imagine how our family would be if this was a normal occurrence," Gordon-Booth says.

"For far too many communities, for far too many families, for far too many neighborhoods, to lose loved ones in a violent way is normal," she added. "That does something to the psychology particularly — particularly — of the young people."

The plan is part of broader set of changes recommended by Gov. Bruce Rauner's criminal justice reform commission.

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