

Pitzer's Law: Proposed Amendment to the Ohio Crime Victims' Bill of Rights and Marsy's Law

This amendment shall be known as "Pitzer's Law" in memory of Casey Lynn Pitzer and to honor the memory of her life and the tragic mishandling of her death investigation. The Law is also for victims like Greg Pitzer and his family who have endured over 12 years of being denied due process and Marsy's Law victim rights. This law is enacted to ensure transparency, fairness, and dignity for victims and their families by mandating complete investigative accountability under Marsy's Law and the Ohio Constitution.

Purpose: To establish a mandatory, universal investigatory and prosecutorial file accessible to the families of individuals who died under suspicious circumstances and were subject to autopsy. The amendment seeks to enforce transparency, retention, and accountability among government agencies involved in death investigations.

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS

(A) Enforcement Standard

All provisions of this amendment shall be interpreted in a manner most favorable to protecting victim rights, ensuring transparency, and preserving access to public records.

(B) Suspicious Death

A death that appears unexpected, unexplained, or potentially related to criminal activity, abuse, neglect, or official misconduct. This includes deaths initially ruled accidental, natural, or undetermined when unresolved questions or new evidence arise.

(C) Marsy's Law Victim Representatives

All rights, privileges, access, and procedural guarantees described in this amendment shall apply equally and without limitation to any legally designated Marsy's Law Victim Representative, as recognized under Article I, Section 10a of the Ohio Constitution. Such representatives shall be afforded the same rights of access, response, notification, and participation as the victim or immediate family members.

(D) Entities Covered by Pitzer's Law

All agencies defined as government retention entities under Ohio Revised Code § 2933.82, including but not limited to:

- County Coroner's Offices
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- Prosecutor's Offices

- Courts of Record

(E) Crime Victims

As defined under Article I, Section 10a of the Ohio Constitution (Marsy's Law), and the Ohio Revised Code.

(F) Mandated Investigative Checklist

A standardized, step-by-step, itemized checklist detailing all records, documents, investigative actions, and evidence required in any suspicious death, missing persons, or homicide investigation. The checklist shall be derived from established investigative protocols to ensure compliance at every phase of the investigation. This tool reinforces adherence to policy and mandates consistency across all applicable cases.

(G) Mandated Victim's List

A standardized document that investigative agencies must provide to victims or their families when Marsy's Law information is initially distributed.

The "Victim's List" may be submitted by the victim or family at the time of their Victim Impact Statement, or at any point during the investigation—including before or after an autopsy is performed. This list serves as an official opportunity for victims and families to:

- Submit reasonable questions or concerns;
- Provide written statements or observations;
- Object to the autopsy, cause or manner of death determination, or investigative findings.

All entries must be formally reviewed and addressed in writing by the lead investigative agency, with oversight and mediation by the County Prosecutor. All written responses must be signed and included in the mandated prosecutorial file. Responses must be provided within ten (10) business days of receipt.

(H) Mandated Prosecutorial File

A comprehensive case file compiled and maintained by the County Prosecutor that includes all known evidence, documents, reports, recordings, and photos that were collected, created, and submitted by relevant agencies in connection with suspicious deaths, missing persons, or homicide investigations.

SECTION 2. AGENCY REQUIREMENTS IN SUSPICIOUS DEATH, MISSING PERSON, AND HOMICIDE INVESTIGATIONS

(A) Interview and Communication Record Preservation Requirement

All relevant persons—including but not limited to suspects, persons of interest, key witnesses, and known associates of the victim—shall be required to participate in structured interviews conducted during both preliminary and follow-up phases of the investigation. These interviews shall:

1. Be conducted on both audio and video recording;
2. Involve a standardized series of investigative questions;
3. Be documented, transcribed, and included in the mandated prosecutorial file;
4. Be made accessible to the victim's immediate family and/or their Marsy's Law representative upon request.

Additionally, all relevant phone records, text messages, emails, social media communications, and other digital interactions of both the victim and the accused shall be subpoenaed and preserved. These digital records:

1. Shall be retained permanently as part of the investigatory file;
2. Shall be submitted to the County Prosecutor;
3. Must be included in the mandated prosecutorial file.

Failure to conduct or preserve these interviews and communications shall constitute a violation of Marsy's Law and this amendment.

(B) Mandatory Case File Submission to Prosecutor

All participating agencies must submit all investigative records— including but not limited to photos, videos, reports, polygraph results, witness statements, forensic analysis, emails, notes, call logs, time sheets, chain-of-custody documents, and sign-in logs— to the County Prosecutor's Office prior to the closure of the case and before checklist certification under Section 2(C)

(C) Prosecutorial Review & Checklist Certification

The County Prosecutor must perform a comprehensive review and verify the completeness of the "mandated investigative checklist" before issuing any final determination regarding a suspicious death, missing persons, or homicide investigation. A formal sign-off must be documented by both the Prosecutor and the lead law enforcement agency.

(D) Victim Family Notification and Delivery of File

Within thirty (30) days after the formal closure of a case, the County Prosecutor shall notify all immediate family members of the deceased—defined as parents, children, and siblings—that the mandated prosecutorial file has been reviewed and signed.

Upon request, the family shall be provided a full and unredacted copy of the file, free of charge.

(E) Response Timeline and Victim Standing

A victim's family shall have the right to participate, ask questions, and access records beginning at the initiation of a suspicious death investigation and continuing through its formal closure.

All required disclosures—including written responses to the Mandated Victim's List—must be fulfilled within the timelines set forth in this section. Failure to comply shall constitute a violation of Marsy's Law and shall be deemed a continuing legal injury.

The following minimum standards shall apply:

1. Written responses to each substantive question or concern must be provided to the family and documented in the mandated prosecutorial file.
2. This process shall begin no later than thirty (30) days after the opening of an official investigation, or the submission of a wrongful death or suspicious death report by the family.

(F) On-Scene Evidence Collection Requirements

All physical evidence located at the scene of a suspicious death shall be:

- Thoroughly collected and preserved;
- Photographed in its original position prior to removal;
- Logged in both written and digital inventories with accurate date and time stamps;
- Assigned a unique chain-of-custody identifier and stored in a secure facility;
- Included in the mandated prosecutorial file.

All photographs, inventory logs, and chain-of-custody documentation must be made accessible, upon request and without unreasonable delay, to the immediate family members of the deceased—defined as parents, children, and siblings.

All photographs, logs, and tracking documents related to the evidence must be made accessible to the immediate family members of the deceased, including parents, children, and siblings, upon request and without unreasonable delay.

(G) Mandatory File Submission to Prosecutor

All participating agencies must submit all investigative records—including but not limited to photos, videos, reports, polygraph results, witness statements, forensic analysis, emails, notes, call logs, time sheets, chain-of-custody documents, and sign-in logs—to the County Prosecutor’s Office prior to the closure of the case and before the completion of the Investigative Checklist.

(H) Victim Family Notification and Delivery of File

Within 30 days of case closure, the County Prosecutor shall notify all immediate family members of the deceased—defined as parents, children, and siblings—that the mandated prosecutorial file is available. A full copy must be provided upon request, free of charge.

(I) Mandatory Forensic Procedures in Suspicious Deaths

Suspicious deaths shall automatically trigger the following mandatory procedures:

1. Sexual Assault Examination Kit (SAEK) collection and submission for testing with no delay;
2. Full toxicology screening;
3. Full-body X-rays;
4. Mandatory DNA sample collection from any known persons of interest or suspects.
5. In all cases where a person of interest or suspect fails a polygraph test, they shall be required to undergo a follow-up custodial interview. This re-interview shall: **a.** Be conducted on recorded audio and video; **b.** Involve extensive and structured questioning; **c.** Be documented as part of the permanent investigatory file submitted to the County Prosecutor.

(J) Mandatory Evidence Preservation

In all cases classified as **suspicious death, missing persons, or homicide investigations**, it shall be mandatory that **all investigative records, physical evidence, and related documentation**—whether generated by law enforcement, coroner offices, prosecutorial agencies, or any affiliated governmental entity—**be permanently preserved**, regardless of whether the death is later classified as accidental, natural, or undetermined.

This provision shall serve to protect the constitutional and procedural rights of both the **accused** and the **deceased**, and to ensure future transparency, accountability, and potential re-investigation. No agency shall destroy, alter, or withhold such records or evidence without a publicly recorded court order and notice to next of kin or victim representatives as defined by law.

(K) Mandatory Next-of-Kin Notification and Consent Prior to Evidence Destruction

In all **suspicious death investigations, no physical evidence, documentation, digital media, or related records** may be destroyed, altered, or discarded by any government agency or investigative body **without the express written consent of the next of kin** of the deceased.

Prior to any destruction, the agency must:

1. Notify the next of kin in writing, outlining the specific items proposed for destruction and the rationale.
2. Obtain a signed, dated consent form from the next of kin authorizing the destruction.

If the next of kin cannot be reached:

- The agency must **document a minimum of three (3) certified mail attempts**, spaced no less than ten (10) business days apart, to the last known address(es) of:
 - The next of kin,
 - Any surviving **siblings** of the deceased,
 - And the **biological or adoptive parents** of the deceased.

These documented attempts shall become part of the permanent investigative file.

No destruction shall occur without either written consent or a **court order based on good cause shown**, and only after reasonable efforts to notify and involve the family have been exhausted.

SECTION 3. CORONER REQUIREMENTS UNDER CASEY’S LAW

(A) Mandatory Family Access to Coroner Records

Any coroner or coroner’s office that generates, receives, or maintains records, documentation, photographs, reports, or any form of evidentiary material related to a suspicious death must provide access to those records to the immediate family of the deceased—defined as parents, children, and siblings—upon request and without delay or denial. No part of the coroner’s file shall be withheld unless a specific legal exemption is cited and documented in writing, with notice provided to the family.

(B) Supplemental Investigation and Family Liaison Requirement

When a Coroner’s Office is presented with credible new evidence or probable cause that suggests a suspicious death may not have been adequately investigated, a supplemental investigation must be initiated **without delay**. The following shall be required:

1. A new or continued review of all existing forensic, photographic, and investigative materials;
2. Assignment of a designated Coroner Investigator as the official liaison to the victim’s family;
3. Direct communication from the assigned investigator to the next of kin within seven (7) business days;

4. A written summary of the supplemental investigation to be included in the mandated prosecutorial file and made available to the victim's immediate family members.

(C) Autopsy Photo Standards

County Coroners must take a minimum of 100 high-resolution photographs during all autopsies in suspicious death, missing persons, and homicide cases. Required images shall include:

- Head: front, back, top, sides, and chin/jaw/neck
- Full-body: anterior, posterior, lateral
- All injury sites, clothing, and physical evidence present on or near the body
- Eyes and mouth, opened and closed

(D) Mandatory Video Review and Documentation

Coroner Investigators are required to review all available video evidence that relates to the case—including surveillance footage, dash cam, bodycam, and civilian recordings—pertaining to the suspicious death. Investigators must prepare a written transcription or summary detailing the timeline of events and relevant observations from the footage. This documentation must:

- Be factually detailed and timestamped;
- Be appended to the coroner's investigative report;
- Be submitted to the County Prosecutor as part of the mandated prosecutorial file.

(E) Mandatory Reporting

All coroner investigator reports and notes, death scene summaries, on scene photos, and full autopsy documentation must be submitted to the County Prosecutor within 90 days of the autopsy.

(F) Mandatory Disclosure of Coroner Case Files To Victims and Families Across All State Jurisdictions

The living victims and immediate family of any deceased person who has undergone an autopsy shall have the right to obtain, upon request and without delay, the complete casefile records from **any coroner's office** that participated in or contributed to the investigation, recovery, transport, autopsy, documentation, or examination of the victim. *This mandate supersedes any conflicting provisional law. Each involved coroner's office shall:

- Identify its involvement in the case upon request
- Provide the complete case file including coroner investigator report and notes, autopsy reports, transport logs, communications regarding victim, photographs, X-rays, DNA reports, chain of custody logs, and toxicology results.
- Provide the casefile free of charge to the immediate family or Marsy's Law representative

- Fulfill the request within fifteen (15) business days, unless a specific legal exemption is cited in writing

SECTION 4. TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY MANDATES

(A) Removal from Public Office for Repeated Violations

Any public official, law enforcement officer, coroner, prosecutor, or government employee who is found to have violated provisions of Pitzer’s Law on two or more separate occasions—whether through refusal to comply, delay, concealment, or denial of rights—shall be subject to permanent disqualification from holding public office or public employment in the state of Ohio. This applies regardless of whether the violations occurred in a single case or across multiple investigations. Findings may be determined through a court of law, ethics board, licensing authority, or official review body empowered to investigate compliance with Marsy’s Law and this amendment.

(B) Mandatory Response to Victim and Family Inquiries

All officials and personnel involved in the investigation, prosecution, or examination of a suspicious death—including but not limited to law enforcement officers, prosecutors, coroner staff, and investigators—are required to respond in writing to any reasonable questions or concerns submitted by the victim or the victim's immediate family. These responses:

1. Shall be prompt, formal, and factually grounded;
2. Shall not be withheld or ignored unless a legal exemption applies and is documented in writing;
3. Must be included in the mandated prosecutorial file;
4. Are considered a right protected under Marsy’s Law and this amendment.

(C) Investigative Meeting Recording Requirement

All formal and informal investigative meetings, case reviews, or strategy discussions held during or after the course of a suspicious death investigation must be recorded in their entirety. These recordings shall:

1. Include audio and/or video documentation of all participants;
2. Be time-stamped and archived;
3. Be submitted to the County Prosecutor as part of the mandated prosecutorial file;
4. Be made accessible upon request to immediate family members of the deceased, unless a legal exemption applies and is documented in writing.

(D) Transport Recording Requirement

When any law enforcement officer transports a suspect or person of interest to or from a polygraph examination, interview, or any related investigatory procedure, the following shall be mandatory:

1. All in-transit conversations must be recorded either by: a. Body-worn camera with unredacted audio, or b. In-vehicle audio/video system with unbroken recording;
2. The full unredacted recording shall be preserved as part of the investigatory file;
3. The County Prosecutor must receive and archive the recording in the mandated prosecutorial file.

(E) Joint Prosecutor–Law Enforcement Certification

All suspicious death case files must receive joint certification and sign-off by both the County Prosecutor and the lead law enforcement agency, attesting to the integrity and completeness of the record.

(F) Communications Recording Requirement

Any official meetings or calls pertaining to a suspicious death investigation must be conducted on recorded government lines. Use of personal cell phones or unrecorded channels to discuss case facts or evidence is strictly prohibited and considered a violation of Marsy’s Law transparency obligations.

SECTION 5. PENALTIES AND ENFORCEMENT

(A) Civil Liability

Any government official, agency, or public employee who knowingly or negligently fails to comply with the requirements of Casey’s Law may be held civilly liable. Victims or their Marsy’s Law representatives shall have a private right of action to file suit for:

1. Declaratory and injunctive relief;
2. Monetary damages for emotional distress, access interference, or harm caused;
3. Attorney’s fees and court costs.

(B) Administrative Sanctions

Violations may be reported to oversight bodies including the Ohio Ethics Commission, the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission, the Ohio State Medical Board, or relevant licensing boards. Sanctions may include:

- Written reprimand
- Suspension or demotion
- Termination of employment

- Referral for disciplinary or licensure review

(C) Criminal Misconduct

Willful falsification, concealment, or destruction of records or evidence required by Casey's Law shall constitute:

- A first-degree misdemeanor for a first offense
- A fifth-degree felony for any second or subsequent offense

(D) Permanent Disqualification

Any public official, prosecutor, coroner, or law enforcement officer found to have committed two or more violations of Casey's Law—whether in one case or multiple cases—shall be permanently disqualified from holding public office or public employment in Ohio.

(E) Reporting and Oversight

The Ohio Attorney General shall establish a secure online system for victims and Marsy's Law representatives to report violations. All reports must be reviewed within 30 days. Findings and remedies must be documented and disclosed to the victim or their representative.

(F) Standing and Timeliness

Casey's Law shall be enforceable in any court of law regardless of the manner of death classification (e.g., undetermined, accidental, homicide). Violations or withheld records constitute a continuing injury, and the statute of limitations shall not bar timely redress for ongoing harm.

EXAMPLE OF: **PITZER’S LAW MANDATED INVESTIGATIVE CHECKLIST**

Pursuant to Pitzer’s Law — Ohio Crime Victims’ Bill of Rights and Marsy’s Law Amendment

Case Name: _____

Case No.: _____

Date of Disappearance: _____

Date of Death or Discovery: _____

Jurisdiction: _____

Lead Law Enforcement Agency: _____

Coroner’s Office(s): _____

County Prosecutor: _____

SECTION A. INITIAL RESPONSE AND SCENE INVESTIGATION

- ☐ 1. Death scene secured and photographed in full (wide, medium, and close shots)
 - ☐ 2. All physical evidence photographed *before* removal (if possible)
 - ☐ 3. All evidence logged with item numbers, date, and time stamps
 - ☐ 4. Chain of custody initiated for every piece of evidence
 - ☐ 5. Unique evidence IDs assigned
 - ☐ 6. Evidence stored in secured facility
 - ☐ 7. Witness canvass conducted
 - ☐ 8. First responder logs/time cards collected
 - ☐ 9. Body position documented with photos prior to removal
 - ☐ 10. Body transport log completed and signed
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SECTION B. DIGITAL & COMMUNICATION EVIDENCE

- ☐ 11. Cell phone of deceased collected and preserved
- ☐ 12. Phone records subpoenaed for deceased and persons of interest
- ☐ 13. Texts, emails, social media messages reviewed and saved
- ☐ 14. Surveillance footage (business/residential) collected and time-synced
- ☐ 15. Dash cam, body cam, in-vehicle recordings reviewed and logged
- ☐ 16. All official calls and meetings recorded and submitted to file
- ☐ 17. Polygraph transport audio/video recorded and preserved

SECTION C. INTERVIEWS & PERSONS OF INTEREST

- ☐ 18. Structured, audio/video-recorded interviews conducted with:
 - ☐ a. Key witnesses
 - ☐ b. Last known associates
 - ☐ c. Suspects/persons of interest
 - ☐ 19. Transcripts prepared and included in file
 - ☐ 20. Any failed polygraph triggers automatic follow-up custodial re-interview
 - ☐ 21. Interview notes logged and dated
-

SECTION D. MEDICAL AND FORENSIC EXAMINATION

- ☐ 22. Full autopsy conducted
 - ☐ 23. Minimum 100 photos taken (see photo protocol)
 - ☐ 24. Full-body X-ray completed
 - ☐ 25. Sexual Assault Examination Kit (SAEK) administered and sent for testing
 - ☐ 26. Toxicology screen completed
 - ☐ 27. Forensic pathologist signed autopsy report
 - ☐ 28. DNA samples collected from suspects and compared
 - ☐ 29. Autopsy photos cataloged and included
 - ☐ 30. Any unknown injuries flagged for review
-

SECTION E. CORONER & PROSECUTORIAL INTEGRATION

- ☐ 31. Coroner Investigator report completed and signed (per involved county)
 - ☐ 32. Video evidence reviewed and detailed summary prepared
 - ☐ 33. Supplemental investigation opened (if new evidence arises)
 - ☐ 34. File submitted to County Prosecutor within 90 days
 - ☐ 35. All documents logged in prosecutorial master file
 - ☐ 36. Family liaison assigned by Coroner
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SECTION F. FAMILY & VICTIM RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

- ☐ 37. Marsy's Law Information Handouts, Pamphlets, and Mandated Victim's List provided to family
 - ☐ 38. Family members interviewed, concerns documented, and responded to in writing
 - ☐ 39. Victim's family objections, questions, or theories addressed in formal memo
 - ☐ 40. Victim Impact Statement received (if applicable)
 - ☐ 41. Prosecutor notified family of case closure and file availability
 - ☐ 41. Evidence Retention Schedule for collected Evidence & Records
 - ☐ 42. Full, unredacted file provided to family upon request (free of charge)
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SECTION G. AGENCY SIGN-OFF AND CERTIFICATION

LEAD LAW ENFORCEMENT CERTIFICATION

☐ I certify that all investigative steps, evidence collection procedures, interview protocols, and victim rights requirements set forth by *Pitzer's Law* have been fully completed and documented.

Signature: _____

Name & Rank: _____

Date: _____

PROSECUTORIAL CERTIFICATION

☐ I certify that I have reviewed all submitted records, verified checklist completion, responded to all family submissions, and ensured all relevant documentation, evidence, video, phone data, has been preserved and is included in the mandated prosecutorial file.

Signature: _____

Name & Title: _____

Date: _____

CHECKLIST VERSION: PZL-OH-MANDATE-1.0

Date Issued: July 2025

Legislative Reference: *Pitzer's Law* — *Ohio Constitution Article I, Section 10a, as amended*

EXAMPLE OF: **PITZER'S LAW MANDATED VICTIM'S LIST**

Pursuant to Pitzer's Law – Ohio Crime Victims' Bill of Rights and Marsy's Law Amendment

Victim Name: _____
Date of Death or Disappearance: _____
Case Number (if known): _____
Jurisdiction: _____
Submitting Individual: ☐ Immediate Family Member ☐ Marsy's Law Representative
Name of Submitter: _____
Relationship to Victim: _____
Contact Information: _____
Date Submitted: _____

Instructions: Please complete each applicable section below. Attach additional pages if needed. This form may be submitted at any time, including before or after an autopsy or case closure.

Investigative agencies are required to respond in writing to each question or concern within 10 business days, and their responses must be included in the official prosecutorial file.

SECTION 1. QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

Please list any questions or concerns regarding the investigation, cause of death, timeline, individuals involved, evidence handling, or agency conduct.

No.	Question or Concern	Response (To Be Completed by Investigative Agency)
1	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____
4	_____	_____
5	_____	_____

SECTION 2. WRITTEN STATEMENT(S) OR OBSERVATIONS

Please provide any factual statements, personal observations, or information you believe is relevant to the case.

(Attach additional pages as needed)

SECTION 3. OBJECTION TO INVESTIGATIVE DETERMINATIONS

☐ I formally object to the **Autopsy** that was performed or planned, and request a written explanation of its necessity.

☐ I formally object to the **Cause of Death** determination:

Stated Cause: _____

Reason for Objection: _____

☐ I formally object to the **Manner of Death** determination:

☐ Homicide ☐ Suicide ☐ Accidental ☐ Natural ☐ Undetermined

Stated Manner: _____

Reason for Objection: _____

☐ I formally object to the **Investigative Closure or Findings** and request a review or supplemental investigation.

Follow Up To Objections Completed By: _____

SECTION 4. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE OR MATERIALS (OPTIONAL)

☐ I am submitting additional materials with this form, including:

☐ Photographs ☐ Documents ☐ Videos ☐ Audio Recordings ☐ Expert Opinions ☐ Witness

Statements

Brief Description of Attachments: _____

SECTION 5. FAMILY REVIEW AND FOLLOW-UP REQUEST

- ☐ I request an in-person or remote meeting with the assigned lead investigator.
- ☐ I request a meeting with the County Prosecutor or victim liaison.
- ☐ I request a written summary of the agency's review and findings based on this submission.
-

SIGNATURE

I hereby submit this Victim's List in accordance with Pitzer's Law. I certify that the information provided is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that this form shall be included in the mandated prosecutorial file and that all responses must be returned in writing within 10 business days.

Signature of Submitter: _____

Date: _____

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Date Received: _____

Agency Acknowledgment (Signature & Date): _____

Assigned Investigator/Responder: _____

Date Responses Provided: _____

- ☐ All responses included in mandated prosecutorial file
- ☐ County Prosecutor oversight complete