

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/seeing-the-whole-picture>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

[Nancy Smith's blog post](#) illustrates that this is, indeed, a complicated issue without a one-size-fits-all answer. It can be true that if prosecutors' offices, in an attempt to hold perpetrators accountable, force victims to testify, they may feel victimized by the system all over again. However, it sometimes isn't that clear.

I've heard of prosecutors having victims transported to court in the back of a police car, even though they are the "complainants." There are two ways to look at this. First, some victims do want to testify, and this method can make it appear to the batterer that they are unwilling and being forced, when secretly they want to tell what happened.

Second, victims who truly do not want to testify and are being forced to do so can end up with their safety being compromised. They may suffer coercion or further violence from the batterer in an attempt to prevent them from testifying. Additionally, once they are brought in to testify they may suffer retaliation. Another issue arises when victims just do not want the batterer to go to jail for any number of reasons.

Although evidence-based prosecution often adds safety for victims, it can take some intentional thought and a lot of planning on the part of the prosecutor to individualize the response to each case, thus ensuring the victim's safety.

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