



## Sample Media Advisory

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
[Date]

**CONTACT:** Your name  
Phone number  
E-mail address

### **[YOUR ORGANIZATION] ANNOUNCES [EVENT] TO COMMEMORATE NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK 2002**

- WHO:** Your organization  
Local official/spokesperson/community guests participating
- WHAT:** To hold an [event] honoring victims of crime, their families, and those who support them. (Examples: candlelight vigil, awards ceremony, commemorative walk)
- WHEN:** Date, Time
- WHERE:** Location (include exact street address and phone number, if directions are needed)
- FACTS:**
- < Statistical information about crime in your community
  - < Background information about National Crime Victims' Rights Week
  - < Your organization's mission statement and program overview

###

*A media advisory should be sent one to two weeks prior to your event (four weeks in advance for a calendar listing), and be followed by targeted telephone calls to the appropriate reporters. The media advisory should be no longer than one page in length and should have contact information prominently displayed at the top of the page.*

## Sample News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

[Date]

**CONTACT:** Your name  
Phone number  
E-mail address

### ***“Bringing Honor To Victims”*** **Americans Commemorate 2002 National Crime Victims’ Rights Week**

[City/State] - During the week of April 21- 27, 2002, victims of crime, victim advocates, criminal and juvenile justice officials, allied professionals, and community volunteers across the United States will observe the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

In the aftermath of September 11, this year's theme, "Bringing Honor to Victims," reflects the country' s heightened awareness of the harsh and tragic impact of crime on its victims, while underscoring the critical importance of helping all victims of crime rebuild their lives.

“The tragedy of September 11 brings special meaning and purpose to this year’ s observance,” said John Gillis, director of the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice. “This week is about bringing honor to all crime victims by promoting a greater understanding of crime victims’ needs, by educating victims about their rights and the resources available to them, and by applauding the countless volunteers and professionals who have dedicated their lives to seeing that those harmed by crime don’ t fall through the cracks.”

For nearly three decades, the victims' rights community has successfully brought crime victims' concerns and issues to the forefront of America's public policy agenda. Today, every state and the federal government provides for the participation of victims in the criminal justice system, helping to make individuals and communities safer and making our justice system stronger. Crime victims’ laws have been passed at the federal, state, and local levels giving victims legal rights, such as the right to be notified throughout the criminal justice process; the right to be consulted before a plea agreement is entered; the right to be present during court proceedings; the right to speak at sentencing; and the right to restitution from a convicted offender.

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## National Crime Victims' Rights Week

[Date]

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Victim advocates also point to other progress. Thirty-two states [including yours, if applicable] have provided the highest protection for the rights of crime victims by enshrining them in their state constitutions. Thousands of local service organizations and offices within criminal justice agencies that provide direct support to victims of crime exist today. And more and more victims of crime are asserting their right to seek redress through civil justice.

Susan Herman, executive director of the National Center for Victims of Crime, encourages people across America to join in saluting the significant achievements of America's crime victims, service providers, and justice professionals in this especially difficult time for Americans.

"National Crime Victims' Rights Week gives us the opportunity to support crime victims and thank those who serve them," said Herman. "Let's build on our past successes and renew our commitment to making comprehensive victims' rights and services a reality in every community. The 26 million people in this country who are victimized by crime each year deserve no less."

Throughout the country, communities are observing National Crime Victims' Rights Week by holding candlelight vigils, awards ceremonies, art exhibits, open houses, commemorative walks, and much more.

In [your city/county/state], numerous activities have been planned to honor victims of crime and those who serve them during National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Included are: [cite examples of special events].

Additional information about National Crime Victims' Rights Week can be found at [www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org) and [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc).

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*Type your news release double-spaced on the sample letterhead included in this Resource Guide. If your news release is more than one page, type "- more -" at the bottom of the first page. Add the title and date of the news release, plus "Page Two", in the top left corner of the second page. At the end of the release, type ### to let the reader know that there is no more to come. Permission is granted to use the provided quotes attributed to John Gillis and Susan Herman.*

## Sample Public Service Announcements

### **15-Second PSA:**

Every crime has a victim, and every victim needs our help. This is National Crime Victims' Rights Week. If you or someone you know has been affected by crime, we can help. Please call [name of your organization] at [your phone number]. That's [your phone number]. Start rebuilding your life today.

### **15-Second PSA:**

In the 15 seconds it takes to listen to this announcement, thousands of lives will be forever changed by crime. Many may spend the next 15 years just trying to rebuild their lives. They need your help. April 21-27 is National Crime Victims' Rights Week. To find out how to help victims of crime in your community, call [name of your organization] at [your phone number]. That's [your phone number].

### **30-Second PSA:**

Are you or someone you know a victim of crime? Are you tired of being told to get over it? Not sure of your options, or don't know what your rights are? Crime can have a lasting physical, emotional, or financial impact on its victims. This is National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 21-27, and [name of your organization] wants you to know that you don't need to struggle alone. There is help. Call them at [your phone number] to get more information about the impact of crime, to learn about your rights, to access victim compensation, and more. Call [your phone number].

## National Crime Victims' Rights Week

[Date]

Page Two

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**30-Second PSA:**

A crime may last only moments, but its impact can be felt for a lifetime. This is National Crime Victims' Rights Week, and this year's theme is "Bringing Honor to Victims." This is a time to reflect on the lives of the 26 million Americans who are affected by crime each year and those special individuals in our community who work hard every day fighting to secure and strengthen victims' rights. To get help or find out what you can do to help in your community, call [name of your organization] at [your phone number]. That's [your phone number].

**60-Second PSA:**

During the next minute, more than 55 people in this country will be harmed by crime. That's almost one person, every second, of every day. Certainly, most of us have been personally affected by crime, or someone close to us has been. Crime affects all ages, races and economic and cultural backgrounds. Some victims of crime move on with their lives fairly easily, but many suffer continuing trauma without the services and support they need, struggling with the psychological, physical, and financial consequences of the crime. This week is National Crime Victims' Rights Week, a time to honor and support victims of crime. It is also a time to recognize those who work hard every day to help crime victims rebuild their lives. If you or someone you know has been a victim of crime, it is time to get help. No one can go through it alone. To find out more about how you can get help or help others in your community, call [name of your organization] at [your phone number].

## Sample Op-Ed

### ***Bringing Honor To Victims: What September 11 Teaches Us About Helping Those Harmed By Crime***

September 11 has heightened this country's awareness of the harsh and tragic impact of crime on its victims. How, in a single moment, one's life can be turned upside down and completely altered through an act of human cruelty.

Although nearly 26 million crimes occur annually in the United States, most of us never stop to think about the people harmed by each of those crimes—the victims. Nor do we consider what these victims might need to rebuild their lives, to recover from what may have been a profoundly traumatic experience.

And, what about the ripple effect of crime? Each family member, friend, and loved one of a victim is, to some extent, touched by the event. They, too, must awaken to find a different world from the one they knew before the tragedy. Their new reality is something they must come to terms with and the difference that will always be there. They, too, must rebuild their lives.

The horror of September 11 gives us an opportunity to reconsider our response to victims of crime generally. We have witnessed unparalleled generosity, from individual acts of kindness to historic levels of charitable giving. Neighbors helping neighbors. Communities reaching out to victims and survivors. Federal legislation, enacted at breakneck speed, compensating victims for their losses. Such a societal response to crime victims is unprecedented.

As we move beyond and learn from the horrific events of the past year, this week—*National Crime Victims' Rights Week*—seems a particularly poignant opportunity to commemorate the progress that has been made to secure rights and services for crime victims.

More than 30 years ago, pioneering victim advocates fought for something previously inconceivable—the provision of basic rights within the criminal and juvenile justice systems for innocent victims of crime. Today, every state and the federal government provides for at least some level of participation by victims in the criminal justice system, helping to make individuals and communities safer and making our justice system stronger.

Laws have been passed at the federal, state, and local levels giving victims certain legal rights, such as the right to be notified throughout the criminal justice process; the right to be consulted before a plea agreement is entered; the right to be present during court proceedings; the right to speak at sentencing; and the right to restitution from a convicted offender. [Describe the victims' rights your state/community, or other signs of progress.]



Other progress has been made. Thirty-two states [including yours, if applicable] have provided even more protection for these rights by enshrining them in their state constitutions. Thousands of local service organizations and offices within criminal justice agencies exist today to provide direct support to victims of crime. And more and more victims of crime are asserting their right to seek redress through civil justice.

But, this week is also a time to recommit ourselves to making sure all crime victims have the help they need, that none fall through the cracks in systems established to protect them. A time to bring honor to victims. How do we do that?

- C When we help them access the resources they need—from financial resources such as crime victim compensation or restitution, to emotional support and counseling—we bring honor to victims.
- C When we help them to plan for their own safety, we bring honor to victims.
- C When we give them the information they need to make their own choices, we bring honor to victims.
- C When we make sure they have the opportunity to participate fully in the criminal justice process, we bring honor to victims.
- C When we validate their experience, when we listen to them describe how their lives have been changed by an event out of their control, and how they have learned to cope, we bring honor to victims.
- C And, we bring honor to victims when we ask them what they need, and we commit ourselves to doing everything we can to help.

Victims' voices speak to us plaintively through the tragedy and pain. We only need to listen. And, in the process, we learn about life and facing hardship. These lessons can teach us all compassion and perspective.

April 21-27 is an opportunity to listen to the voices of victims of crime, and to those who help them. Throughout the week, our community will sponsor candlelight vigils, commemorative walks, public awareness campaigns [describe your own activities].

With National Crime Victims' Rights Week as a springboard, every person in [your community] can join in our crusade for victims' rights, victim services, and victim justice. Our individual and community safety depends on such involvement, and our journey towards honoring victims, and helping them heal, cannot be completed without the involvement and commitment of everyone. You can join our many initiatives that bring honor to victims and, in turn, make a positive difference in someone's life and most likely your own. These are the lessons of September 11.

Every crime has a victim. And, every victim needs our help.

*Consider this sample op-ed a starting point in developing your own. Make it relevant to your own community by adding state or local crime statistics and/or by discussing an issue of particular concern within your community. The length of this document is approximately 810 words. Call your local newspaper to find out its editorial guidelines, such as length and deadlines. Remember to include the author's name, title, and organization name. Sharing additional information about your organization and its programs also can be helpful.*

## Sample Letter Requesting a Proclamation or Resolution

Honorable [Name]  
[Official Title]  
Street Address or P.O. Box  
City/State/Zip Code

Dear [Name]:

The **2002 National Crime Victims' Rights Week** is April 21- 27, 2002. This annual commemorative week provides an excellent opportunity for our [ *City/County/State*] to demonstrate its support for crime victims and those who serve them by educating our citizens about violence, victimization, and the importance of their support for victims' rights and services.

[*Your organization*] would be honored if you would sponsor an official [*proclamation/resolution*] to recognize April 21- 27, 2002, as [ *City/County/State*] **Crime Victims' Rights Week**. Your [*proclamation/resolution*] would lead the community in our effort to bring honor to crime victims, and to extend official recognition to the important work of victim service providers. I have enclosed a sample [ *proclamation/resolution*] which may help your office compose the appropriate [ *proclamation/resolution*] for our [ *City/County/State*].

*Insert the following paragraph if you are sponsoring a public awareness event:*

[*List of organizations co-sponsoring event*] are sponsoring [ *describe event*] on [ *date*] at [ *time*] at [ *location*]. We hope you will attend this special event to present your [ *proclamation/resolution*]. If you are unable to attend personally, we ask that you delegate an official representative to read the [ *proclamation/resolution*] during our event.

If you or your staff have any questions concerning our request, the sample [*proclamation/resolution*], or **2002 National Crime Victims' Rights Week** please call me at [ *phone number*]. I will follow-up with your office on this request in the next few days. As always, we appreciate your past support of [ *your organization's*] efforts to support crime victims. Thank you for your consideration of this special request.

Sincerely,

Enclosure: [*proclamation/resolution*]

## Sample Proclamation

As our [City/State] continues to make strides in reducing the crime rate, we must remember that there are still far too many victims of crime. Those who have suffered a violation of their person, property, or trust deserve to be treated with dignity and respect by our criminal and juvenile justice systems and by society at-large.

We recognize that our response to crime victims plays an important role in their efforts to rebuild their lives following the offense. Let all of us —policy makers, those in the criminal justice system, counselors, clergy members, and members of the general public —do what we can to ***Bring Honor to Victims***, responding to crime victims compassionately and respectfully.

While our [City/State] has adopted laws to protect the rights of victims of crime and provide them certain essential services, all of us must do what we can to adhere not only to the letter of victims' rights laws but the spirit of those laws as well. Let us acknowledge that, just as government must be open to its citizens, our system of justice must be open to victims of crime. In the year 2002 and beyond, let us ***Bring Honor to Victims*** and create a world where respect and dignity will be basic rights for everyone victimized by crime, and where those responsible for implementing the rights of victims are accountable for their actions.

Through public and private efforts, our community has already taken important steps to ensure that our treatment of victims helps them to begin the healing. Let us gratefully acknowledge all those who work, often as volunteers, on behalf of crime victims. Let us recognize those many law enforcement officers, prosecutors, victim service providers, corrections officers, parole and probation officers, counselors, physicians, health care professionals, and the many others whose dedication and service to crime victims helps to lessen trauma and assists in personal recoveries. Let us in particular express our appreciation for those victims and survivors of crime who have turned personal tragedy into a motivating force not only to improve the rights and treatment of other victims of crime but, also, to build a better, more just community.

I hereby proclaim the week of April 21 - 27, 2002, ***Crime Victims' Rights Week***, and urge the citizens of this [City/State] to use the week to reaffirm our commitment to see that crime victims receive our respect, understanding, and help this week and throughout the year.

*Note: A proclamation is appropriate for your Mayor or Governor.*

## Sample Resolution

- Whereas,** one violent crime is committed in America every 5 seconds and one property crime every 1.6 seconds; and
- Whereas,** 25.9 million Americans are victims of crime each year, and of those, 6.3 million are victims of violent crime; and
- Whereas,** despite the recent reduction in the rate of crime, far too many persons still suffer the impact of crime; and
- Whereas,** crime victims play an indispensable role in bringing offenders to justice; and
- Whereas,** victims of crime deserve respect, resources, restoration, and justice; and
- Whereas,** as we carry crime victims' rights into 2002 and beyond, we must ***Bring Honor to Victims***, striving to create a world where the legal rights of victims are honored and government agencies are accountable for their treatment of victims; and
- Whereas,** despite significant progress in providing rights and services to crime victims over the past two decades, large segments of our population, including crime victims who are elderly, disabled, or living in rural areas, are still under-served; and
- Whereas,** as a nation devoted to liberty and justice for all, America must increase its efforts to protect, restore, and expand crime victims' rights and services; and
- Whereas,** [Your organization] is joining forces with victim service programs, criminal justice officials, and concerned citizens throughout [ your City/County/State] and America to observe ***National Crime Victims' Rights Week***;
- Therefore, be it**
- Resolved,** that [elected official or government entity] designates the week of April 21- 27, 2002, as [City/County/State] ***Crime Victims' Rights Week***; and be it further
- Resolved,** that [elected official or government entity] reaffirms a commitment to respect and enforce victims' rights and address their needs during ***2002 [City/County/State] Crime Victims' Rights Week*** and throughout the year; and be it further
- Resolved,** that this official proclamation be presented to [ your organization] on [date].

*Note: A resolution is appropriate for legislative bodies such as your state legislature or city council.*