

April 28, 2009

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: House Res. 109 supports the goals and mission of National Crime Victims' Rights week, which is being celebrated this week, April 26 through May 2, 2009. The 2009 National Crime Victims' Rights week theme is ``25 Years of Rebuilding Lives: Celebrating the Victims of Crime Act."

Mr. Speaker, each year for the last 25 years, the Office of Victims of Crime in the Department of Justice has observed National Crime Victims' Rights week along with individuals and communities across the country. Victims' rights and crime victims are honored with rallies, candlelight vigils, and other commemorative events.

This week in April is an important time to increase public awareness about the needs and concerns of the 25 million victims and survivors of crime each year, of which over 6 million are victims of violent crimes.

During National Crime Victims' Rights week, people are asked to take time out to acknowledge the impact that crime has on families, individuals, and communities by ensuring that resources and services are available to help crime victims rebuild their lives.

We would also like to acknowledge the 25 years of contributions that the Office of Victims of Crime has made to supporting victims of both violent and nonviolent crime. A major aspect of the office's work has been the creation and supervision of the Crime Victims Fund. This fund is paid for by criminal fines and penalties and supplemented with general tax revenue as needed. Over the last 25 years, the Crime Victims Fund has collected more than \$9 billion from offender fines and penalties, which is used solely to assist crime victims. Each year these funds support direct services and financial compensation to more than 4 million victims of crime.

This week is also a time to make a commitment to providing more resources and services to crime victims who live in underserved areas such as urban and rural areas. This is also time to pay special attention to victims of crime who suffer from physical and mental disabilities in addition to child and senior citizens who may be victims of crime.

Mr. Speaker, we should be doing more to invest in crime prevention and therefore reducing the number of victims, but meanwhile this resolution gives us the opportunity to celebrate victims' rights and their dignity. We should ensure that victims are treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve, and doing that will promote a fair and just criminal justice system. For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.