



Crime Victims Week, 1989

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

A crime is more than a violation of the law; in every case it is the violation of the rights, property, person or trust of another human being. Justice, therefore, must mean more than a fair trial for the accused criminal and an appropriate sentence for the guilty. Justice also requires that the rights and losses of the innocent victim be duly vindicated.

For too long, our criminal justice system focused on the rights of offenders and paid little or no attention to the rights and needs of those victims who suffered physically, emotionally, and financially. However, the 1982 President's Task Force on Victims of Crime focused national attention on the numerous inequities in the system. Since then, the Federal Government has been working hard with the States to encourage the development and expansion of programs for crime victims. Last October, the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, which established a Crime Victims Fund in the U.S. Treasury that is financed by penalty assessments on all convicted Federal defendants, was reauthorized for 6 more years. Cooperative efforts at all levels of government will continue in order to improve responsiveness to the needs of crime victims.

This Administration is committed to maintaining the essential support system for victims and is determined to find additional ways to provide timely restitution to victims and to help them recover from the trauma of victimization. Federal and State dollars alone cannot do the job. Social service agencies, schools, hospitals, businesses, churches, and private citizens play a vital role in assisting victims of crime, and we must continue to support their efforts. Now more than ever, we need to enlist volunteers. I have spoken of a thousand points of light—of all the community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the Nation, doing good. We must ensure that those groups who offer the bright promise of hope and healing to crime victims continue to thrive. We must ensure that crime victims receive our special attention and that the combined efforts of concerned citizens, lawmakers, and criminal justice personnel help to improve and expand services for them.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the week beginning April 9, 1989, as Crime Victims Week. As we rededicate ourselves to responding with speed and sensitivity to the needs of innocent crime victims, we must also resolve to educate our citizens about ways to minimize the risk of victimization. As always, we must rely on the courage and generosity of the American people in fighting crime and alleviating the suffering it causes. This week, we have an opportunity to express our gratitude to those who have worked tirelessly to meet the needs of innocent crime victims and their families. I urge all Americans to continue to show compassion for the victims of crime, as well as appreciation for those who work for justice.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirteenth.

George Bush