

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

24-17

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

March 2, 2021

To declare the week of April 18 to 24, 2021 as “Crime Victims’ Rights Week” in the District of Columbia.

WHEREAS, preserving and improving the dignity and safety of all residents will contribute to a vibrant and healthy District of Columbia;

WHEREAS, there are victims of 20 million crimes in the United States annually, and each crime impacts both individuals and communities;

WHEREAS, the District must help victims access the justice, assistance, and support they need to heal and rebuild their lives;

WHEREAS, many victims face barriers – such as isolation, distrust of government, language access, transportation access, and cultural barriers – that keep them from accessing the services and criminal legal processes that can help them recover from crime;

WHEREAS, reaching and serving all victims of crime is essential to supporting thriving communities, because those who receive holistic services and support are more likely to remain invested in their communities;

WHEREAS, with the unwavering support of their communities and victim service providers behind them, survivors will be empowered to face their grief, loss, fear, anger, and hope without fear of judgment, and will feel understood, heard, and respected;

WHEREAS, the District must expand the circle of those prepared to respond to victims and link them to the resources that can help them recover;

WHEREAS, engaging a broad array of healthcare providers, community leaders, faith organizations, educators, and businesses can provide new links between victims and services that improve their safety, healing, and access to justice;

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WHEREAS, crime victims' rights laws passed here in the District, including through the D.C. Crime Victims' Bill of Rights, and at the federal level through the Crime Victims' Rights Act, have provided victims with ways to meaningfully participate in criminal legal processes;

WHEREAS, the rights of crime victims are best protected when all participants in the criminal legal process are appropriately educated about those rights and accountable to the community;

WHEREAS, supporting victims of crime is crucial to the criminal legal system because such support honors the experiences of victims and allows them to find autonomy and empowerment through achieving self-defined goals;

WHEREAS, advocacy by and for victims of crime is itself a form of seeking justice and is equally important to justice sought through the courts or alternative means, such as restorative justice processes;

WHEREAS, the accomplishments of the victims' rights movement – achieved through compassion and collaboration, and built on the courageous advocacy of individual victims and their families across the country – inspire in us hope for future progress and greater healing;

WHEREAS, the District must respond to crime and violence by helping victims find not only support, recovery, and justice, but also hope for their future;

WHEREAS, Crime Victims' Rights Week provides an opportunity to recommit ourselves to ensuring that accessible, appropriate, and trauma-informed services are offered to all victims of crime; and

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia is dedicated to strengthening victims in the aftermath of crime, building resilience within our communities and among those serving crime victims, and bringing hope and healing to all victims and survivors.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the "Crime Victims' Rights Week Recognition Resolution of 2021".

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia declares the week of April 18 to 24, 2021 as "Crime Victims' Rights Week" in the District of Columbia.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.