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# Presidential Documents

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Title 3—

Proclamation 7084 of April 20, 1998

The President

National Crime Victims' Rights Week, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

## A Proclamation

Every day, thousands of Americans become victims of crime. Many suffer physical injury, and most experience emotional scars that may never fully heal. And all victims of crime, and their families and friends, often remain troubled by feelings of vulnerability and concerned about their personal safety.

Five years ago, my Administration made a commitment to take back our streets from criminals and to combat the crime and violence that affects so many Americans. With the Crime Act, the Brady Act, the Violence Against Women Act, and other tough legislation, we have put into action a comprehensive anticrime strategy that includes community policing, antigang programs, and strong penalties for criminals.

Our strategy is working. Crime rates across the country are at a 25-year low. Violent crimes and property crimes have decreased, and the murder rate is down dramatically. While we can take pride in this progress, we cannot afford to become complacent. We must build on the anticrime programs we have put into place if we are to win the war against crime.

As part of our continuing efforts, this year the Department of Justice is awarding more than \$135 million in grants under the Violence Against Women program to help State and local authorities reduce domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault. These funds will enable communities to train more police, hire prosecutors, and provide assistance to the victims of such crimes. Earlier this month, after thorough study, the Secretary of the Treasury concluded that we should ban more than 50 kinds of modified assault weapons because they accept large-capacity military magazines. By keeping these weapons off our streets and out of the hands of criminals, we will take another crucial step toward halting the scourge of gun violence that has taken such a tragic toll on America's children and families.

During National Crime Victims' Rights Week, we call to mind those whose lives have been so abruptly and often violently changed. This annual observance is also a powerful reminder of the extraordinary capacity of our citizens to face adversity and overcome it. Across America, victims of crime have refused to become victims of a criminal justice system that too often ignores or compromises their rights while protecting the rights of criminals.

With courage and determination, crime victims and their dedicated advocates have succeeded in winning constitutional amendments in 29 States that guarantee such fundamental rights as protection from further harm, which includes keeping victims and accused criminals in separate rooms during court proceedings; the right of victims to call upon law enforcement if they feel they are being harassed or intimidated in connection with a pending case; and the right to be notified of a convicted criminal's release from incarceration. And after decades of advocacy, a proposed Federal constitutional amendment for victims now lies before the Congress. We have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to amend the United States Constitution to ensure that the rights of victims are honored in every court throughout our Nation.

This year, our observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week coincides with the anniversary of the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. That tragedy brought home to an entire Nation the extraordinary suffering and grief that can be rendered by a single, senseless, criminal act. In remembering the many victims of this brutal crime, let us pledge to sustain our efforts to reduce violent crime, to provide comfort and support to its victims as they strive to rebuild their lives, and to keep victims' rights a primary concern in America's criminal justice system.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, 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 April 19 through April 25, 1998, as National Crime Victims' Rights Week. I urge all Americans to remember crime victims and their families by working to reduce violence, to assist those harmed by crime, and to make our homes and communities safer places in which to live and raise our families.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William J. Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "W" and "C".