

Proclamation 5638 of April 24, 1987**Victims of Crime Week, 1987**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Nearly 35 million Americans became victims of crime in 1986. Six million of them were victims of serious, violent crimes. Crime—of any kind—can have a devastating impact on innocent victims and their families. Besides the immediate physical and financial injuries, criminal deeds exact an emotional toll from their victims that can deprive them of their health, their sense of security and control, and even their basic trust in others, the core of our social contract. Many victims desperately and futilely search for the reason a criminal chose them as prey. When they turn to the wider community for solace and support, they are often ignored, treated insensitively, or, worst of all, blamed for their plight.

Nothing is benign about such neglect of those whom our society has failed to shield from harm. Evaluating our criminal justice system's response to the needs of victims, the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime found that it frequently compounded the indignity they suffered. The system often failed to protect victims from defendants released on bail; it did not inform or consult victims before crucial decisions were made regarding their cases; it failed to hold violent criminals fully accountable for the damage done to innocent lives. While affording assistance to the accused, the criminal justice system offered only limited support to the victim striving to cope with the sudden, tremendous, and utterly unjust burdens imposed by a criminal attack.

Four years ago the Task Force produced a reform agenda designed to restore balance to the criminal justice system. Since then, action has been taken on nearly 80 percent of its proposals in every part of our country. Law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges are being educated on the needs of crime victims. The number of community programs providing direct services and assistance to victims is growing rapidly. More than 40 States have enacted new laws recommended by the Task Force to better protect the interests of crime victims. In an unprecedented expression of support, the Federal government has given the States the proceeds from fines and penalties levied against individuals convicted of Federal crimes. The States are using these proceeds to expand their assistance programs for victims.

This progress is truly encouraging, and the swelling tide of support for victims suggests that reforms on their behalf will continue to be made in the future. I commend the men and women inside and outside the justice system, in government and the private sector, and in communities throughout our Nation who are dedicated to the fair treatment of the innocent victims of crime. By their actions, they affirm our Nation's commitment to the goal of liberty and justice for all.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, 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 26 as Victims of Crime Week, 1987. I urge government officials and all citizens

to continue to help the innocent victims of crime and to treat them with respect, compassion, and fairness, for the sake of justice and human dignity.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 24th day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eleventh.

RONALD REAGAN

Proclamation 5639 of April 26, 1987

National Volunteer Week, 1987: Our Constitutional Heritage

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Two hundred years ago, when our Founding Fathers drafted the Constitution that has remained our charter of liberty, they began it with the immortal words, "We the People." These are but three words, yet they say everything about America and about Americans. We have God-given dignity and rights neither granted by the state nor subject to it; we take responsibility for living our lives in freedom; and we come to the assistance of our neighbors in time of need.

The spirit of "We the People" is the American spirit, and we Americans will always honor it and live by it. Just one example of this is our heritage of voluntarism, which is flourishing today. "We the People"—89 million of us—volunteer our time, energy, talents, and material resources to create a better America. There is no problem facing us today that volunteers are not addressing. We can all be grateful to America's generous volunteers and glad that the tradition of voluntarism will continue to serve us in the future as it has in the past.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, in recognition of the indispensable contributions volunteers make to our national life, do hereby proclaim the week of April 26 through May 2, 1987, as National Volunteer Week: Our Constitutional Heritage, and I call upon the people of the United States to commemorate the week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 26th day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eleventh.

RONALD REAGAN