

**Proclamation 5322 of April 19, 1985****Victims of Crime Week, 1985**

*By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation*

The primary function of a government is to ensure that its citizens can live safely in their communities. Yet each year millions of our citizens face the reality of violent crime, and their lives are forever changed by these acts. Many are afraid to leave their homes after dark. Others are barricaded inside with multiple locks on their doors and steel bars on their windows.

The strength of our justice system depends, in large part, upon the willingness of the innocent victims of crime to cooperate with it. Unless victims participate in the judicial process, society cannot punish criminals and prevent them from committing more crimes. While we need the help of innocent victims, they in turn deserve our support. They do not ask for pity. They ask only for our support as they recover from an unexpected, unwanted, and undeserved trauma.

After decades when most concern was focused on the rights of criminals, the public has recognized that the victims of criminals have rights also. Guided by the recommendations of the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime, my Administration is striving to ensure fair treatment for innocent victims. We are working with national organizations, as well as State and local agencies, to help people whose lives have been shattered through no fault of their own.

One of the most encouraging developments in this regard was the passage of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, which offers unprecedented assistance to States to meet some of the needs of the targets of violent behavior. We have examined in particular the plight of people who are assaulted by people they know and trust, and we have proposed reforms to assure them the full protection of the law. It is the nature of the crime, not the relationship of the victim to the offender, that should guide the actions of the justice system.

We may reduce the frequency of violent crime, but we will never eliminate it. Every year millions of our fellow citizens will face it for the first time, and millions more will continue to face the daily challenge of lives forever changed by it. As citizens of a Nation promising justice for all, they must be treated with respect and compassion.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning April 14, 1985, as Victims of Crime Week. I commend those innocent victims who have turned their anguish into action to protect their fellow citizens. I urge officials at all levels of government to give special attention to the burdens crime victims face. I ask that all Americans listen and respond to the needs of crime victims, who urgently require and deserve our support.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 19th day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

RONALD REAGAN

*Editorial note:* For the President's remarks of Apr. 19, 1985, on signing Proclamation 5322, see the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (vol. 21, p. 481).