

Legislation Text

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Recognizing the week of April 8 - 14, 2018 as “Philadelphia Crime Victims Rights Week” to encourage citizens to assist crime victims and to increase community awareness and support for the organizations that help crime victims rebuild their lives.

WHEREAS, National Crime Victims Rights Week was established in 1981 to promote awareness and support for victims of crime, and is sponsored by the federal Office for Victims of Crime which provides funding to state victim assistance and compensation programs; and

WHEREAS, Various advocacy groups in the United States hold events within their respective cities annually to call attention to crime victims’ rights during this particular week, focusing on a specific national theme; and

WHEREAS, This year’s theme is “Expand the Circle: Reach All Victims”, emphasizing how the crime victims field can improve victim access to support services; and

WHEREAS, A large proportion of people can expect to become the victim of a crime at some point in their lifetime, making crime not a remote or distant issue, but rather one that touches many of our families and communities; and

WHEREAS, Young people are disproportionately victimized compared to other age groups. Of the national population of 14 to 17-year-olds, over 69 percent had been assaulted, 56 percent had experienced a property victimization (including robbery), 41 percent had been maltreated, and 27 percent had been sexually victimized at some point in their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, Crimes such as domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse affect survivors in the most intimate aspects of their lives; and

WHEREAS, According to the National Center for Victims of Crime, 25% of crime victims experienced lifetime PTSD and 23% of family members of homicide victims have also developed PTSD at some point in their lives; and

WHEREAS, Too often, factors such as language and culture, sexual orientation or gender identity, age, disability, and social isolation may prevent victims from seeking and receiving help; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has taken steps through its Sanctuary City policy to extend protections to undocumented immigrants, including those who are victims and witnesses to crimes, so that no one needs fear that a call to the police for assistance will result in deportation; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia’s robust network of victim advocacy organizations--including the Anti-Violence Partnership of Philadelphia, Center City Crime Victim Services, North Central Victim Services, Northeast Philadelphia Victim Services, Northwest Victim Services, Support Center for Child Advocates, Victim Witness Services of South Philadelphia, Women Against Abuse, and Women Organized Against Rape- provide crucial

services to crime victims throughout the City, often employing culturally-sensitive and trauma-informed practices to ensure that victims have appropriate care and support at their time of greatest need; and

WHEREAS, Victims of crime living in the City of Philadelphia may receive compensation through the Victims Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP) which is operated by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. VCAP aids victims of crime by helping cover their medical, counseling, and travel expenses, as well as the loss of their earnings and support; and

WHEREAS, Rallies, candlelight vigils, and a host of commemorative activities are held each year to promote victims' rights and to honor crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Recognizes the week of April 8 - 14, 2018 as "Philadelphia Crime Victims Rights Week" to encourage citizens to assist crime victims and to increase community awareness and support for the organizations that help crime victims rebuild their lives.