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Victims of Crime

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Mai Fernandez

March 25, 2013

The Honorable Trent Franks
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0302

Dear Congressman Franks:

The National Center for Victims of Crime is writing to express our strong support for your proposed Victims' Rights Constitutional Amendment. The National Center is a nonprofit organization that advocates for victims' rights, trains professionals who work with victims, and serves as a trusted source of information on victims' issues. Our mission is to forge a national commitment to help victims of crime rebuild their lives. The National Center believes that crime victim justice as an integral part of the criminal justice system.

Your proposal would guarantee that every victim of crime has the right to certain basic legal rights including the right to reasonable notice public proceedings related to the offense; the right not to be excluded from such proceedings; the right to be heard at certain criminal justice proceedings affecting their rights and interests, the right to proceedings free from unreasonable delay, the right to be informed of the release or escape of the accused, the right to have their safety considered, and the right to restitution. This amendment would also give victims the legal standing to assert those rights in court.

While legal rights for crime victims are already provided by state constitutional amendments in 32 states, and by statute in all states and at the federal level, those rights vary in strength and scope. Incorporation of these rights into the United States Constitution is important to ensure their full protection. Enshrining crime victims' rights in our nation's fundamental law will also provide that any crime victim anywhere in the country can expect the same basic level of victims' rights.

We applaud you for sponsoring this important measure, and for your support for victims of crime. We urge your colleagues to join you in passing this measure.

Sincerely,



Mai Fernandez