



Department of Justice

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias
Northern District of Georgia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

04/24/09

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan/>

CONTACT: Patrick Crosby

(404)581-6016

FAX (404)581-6160

Media Advisory

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

Atlanta, GA -David E. Nahmias, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia, and all heads of federal investigative agencies in the Northern District of Georgia announce that the Annual Crime Victims Rights Week is scheduled for April 26-May 2, 2009.

United States Attorney David Nahmias said of the upcoming week, “‘Crime Victims’ Week’ is only a reminder of what should be happening for all 52 weeks every year: justice, care and healing for victims of crime. Our prosecutors are in court daily working to ensure that criminals are brought to justice and never create any more victims. But that rarely brings full closure or healing for those who have been victimized. That's why we support the nationwide efforts to provide counseling and every resource we can find to help crime victims. This upcoming week is an opportunity to pause and remember victims who have suffered as a result of crime, and to recommit ourselves to prosecute those who criminally victimize others.”

Here in the Northern District of Georgia, the number of federal cases alone demands an extraordinary effort to support and notify victims. In 2008, the United States Attorney's Office, through its Victim/Witness Unit, provided 21,710 victims with notifications about such matters as their rights as victims, scheduling of hearings and outcomes of court proceedings.

Sadly, fraud against the elderly is too common. Con men target the elderly because they are a more vulnerable population, and as such may be more susceptible to the smooth lies of these criminals. Statistics from the National White Collar Crime Center indicate that the average loss per internet fraud complaint is \$866 for people age 60 and older. This loss is higher than any other age group. One project of the United States Attorney's Office is the distribution of a flyer entitled "Don't Fall for Frauds: Some Tips" to senior citizens in the Northern District of Georgia. The tip sheet gives advice about how to avoid becoming a victim of fraud. So far, we have distributed approximately 9,000 copies of these flyers to area senior centers, Meals on Wheels programs, other homebound care facilities, and other state and local agencies.

Crime Victims' Week is marked nationwide not only by the Department of Justice and all of its United States Attorney's Offices, but by other federal, state and local participating agencies. Many of the agencies and community programs get financial, volunteer, and other support to maintain their services for crime victims nationwide.

The first event commemorating Crime Victims Rights Week is the annual Memorial Service, which will be held at Northside United Methodist Church, 2799 Northside Drive, Atlanta, GA, on Sunday, April 26, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. The service is designed to be a healing event for all victims of any crime. The theme of Victims' Rights Week this year is "25 Years of Rebuilding Lives: Celebrating the Victims of Crime." The loss of a loved one to a homicide or a DUI accident is a terrible tragedy, and the Crime Victim's Advocacy Council (CVAC), the Metro District Attorneys and the U.S. Attorney's Office hope you will join us in honoring these victims. A memorial wall of those murdered in Metro Atlanta from 1991 to 2008 will be on display and families and friends will stand united as crime survivors who have experienced a tragedy in their families.

Later in the week, on Wednesday, April 29, the United States Attorney's Office Victim/Witness Unit will host an information booth at the Department of Juvenile Justice and Spaulding County Sheriff's Victim Service Unit event, Griffin RYDC, 105 Justice Blvd., Griffin, Georgia. The booth will highlight the services we offer to crime victims. For more information on this event, contact DeBaja Coleman at 404-683-2492.

Beginning in the 1980's, there were few victims' rights that offered information, protection, and assistance to those who were hurt by crime, and only one state had a "victims' bill of rights." Today, there are over 32,000 federal and state statutes and at least 32 state-level constitutional amendments that define and protect victims' rights. Every state and the District of Columbia have a "victims' bill of rights.

The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) have provided billions of dollars to support a wide range of crime victim services that address victims' needs for information, protection, counseling, and help in exercising their rights throughout the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Now there are over 10,000 nationwide community and justice system-based programs that help victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, drunk driving, elder abuse, child abuse, hate violence, terrorism, identity theft, and survivors of homicide victims.

Every year, the United States Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) awards millions of dollars to supplement Georgia's crime victim compensation program, which allows crime victims to receive financial help with their medical bills and other crime-associated expenses. In 25 years, the fund has grown from \$68 million to more than \$2 billion and is disbursed throughout the nation, for victims' out-of-pocket expenses, medical care, counseling, funerals and lost wages, among other financial aid to a variety of victims.

For more information about Georgia's victim assistance programs, contact the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. Molly J. M. Perry, the Agency's Executive Director, can be reached at 104 Marietta Street, Suite 440, Atlanta, Georgia, 30303, or by telephone at 404-657-1956. Information about OVC and its programs is available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc or by calling the Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center at 800-627-6872. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.