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OFFICE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN HIGHLIGHTS SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS OF STALKING CRIMES REPORT

WASHINGTON – The Department of Justice’s Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) today commented on the *Stalking Victimization in the United States Special Report* released by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The Supplemental Victimization Survey (SVS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) was specifically developed, with funding from OVW, to provide national-level data on the crime of stalking. The SVS represents the largest study of stalking conducted to date and incorporated elements in federal and state laws to construct a definition of stalking.

“The *Stalking Victimization in the United States Special Report*, confirms what we in the field have long known - that stalking is pervasive, that women are at higher risk of being stalked, and that there is a dangerous intersection between stalking and more violent crimes,” said Cindy Dyer, Director of OVW. “As a result of this study, OVW is even more committed to addressing the crime of stalking by providing safety to victims and holding perpetrators accountable.”

To have the findings of the impact of stalking crimes available during January, designated as Stalking Awareness month, is of special significance. Millions of persons are reported to be victims of stalking. OVW will begin using the *Special Report* in future trainings, meetings and discussions to strengthen the work of its grantees and partners in responding to this crime.

During a 12 month period an estimated 3.4 million persons age 18 or older were victims of stalking. Females experienced 20 stalking victimizations per 1,000 females age 18 or older. The rate of stalking victimizations for males was approximately 7 per 1,000 males age 18 or older.

Additional findings include:

- Persons age 18 to 19 and 20 to 24 experienced the highest rates of stalking victimization;
- One in 7 victims reported they moved as a result of the stalking;
- Approximately 60% do not report victimization to the police.

The SVS identified seven types of harassing or unwanted behaviors consistent with stalking, and individuals were classified as stalking victims if they responded that they experienced two or more of these behaviors on two or more separate occasions. In addition, the individuals must have reported fear for their safety or that of a family member as a result of the course of conduct, or they must have experienced additional threatening behaviors that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear. The SVS measured the following:

- making unwanted phone calls;
- sending unsolicited or unwanted letters or e-mails;
- following or spying on the victim;
- showing up at a place where they had no reason to be;
- waiting at places for the victim;
- leaving unwanted items, presents, or flowers;
- posting information or spreading rumors about the victim on the internet, in a public place, or by word of mouth.

Other findings include descriptions of the most common types of stalking behavior, characteristics of stalking offenders, extent of cyberstalking and electronic monitoring, the emotional impact of stalking on victims, the financial impact of stalking on victims and how often stalking victimizations are reported to the police. The full report and its related statistical data and tables are available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/svus.htm

The Office on Violence Against Women provides leadership in developing the nation's capacity to reduce violence against women through the implementation of the Violence Against Women Act and subsequent legislation. Created in 1995, OVW administers financial and technical assistance to communities across the country that are developing programs, policies and practices aimed at ending domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. In addition to overseeing 18 federal grant programs, OVW often undertakes initiatives in response to areas of special need, dedicating resources to develop enhancements in areas requiring particular attention or in communities facing particularly acute challenges.

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