



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

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News Release

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April 10–16 is Crime Victims' Rights Week *U.S. Attorney Says Victim Assistance is at the Heart of all Prosecutions*

MINNEAPOLIS –U.S. Attorney B. Todd Jones today announced that this week is National Crime Victims' Rights Week. The theme of this year's observance, "Reshaping the Future, Honoring the Past," recognizes that crime victims face the task of reshaping their lives following victimization, while investigators and prosecutors honor those victims by pursuing their offenders to the fullest extent under the law.

In making today's announcement, U.S. Attorney Jones said, "While the country's overall violent crime rate has declined by more than 15 percent since 2000, too many people continue to be victimized. Particularly troubling is the fact that young people, those between the ages of 12 and 24, are most often the victims of violent crime. This is unacceptable, and we will continue to work to address these problems."

Awareness of federal crime victims and the issues they face was greatly heightened in 2004, with the enactment of the Crime Victims' Right Act ("CVRA"). That act grants federal crime victims certain enforceable rights during criminal proceedings, including the right to be heard in court and the right to receive full and timely restitution as provided by law. Crime victims also have the right to be notified of pertinent court events, such as indictment, trial, and sentencing. In Fiscal Year 2010, U.S. Attorney Offices nationwide collectively notified crime victims of nearly eight million case events. In the District of Minnesota alone, more than 73,000 such notices were provided.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in the District of Minnesota has a dedicated Victim-Witness Unit. In addition to ensuring compliance with victims' rights, as set forth in federal statute, the members of that unit, when needed, accompany crime victims to court, make referrals for counseling, and assist in accessing victim compensation funds. Nationally, in Fiscal Year 2010, an estimated 19,000 federal crime victims were accompanied to court and more than 23,000 were referred for victim services.

Another way in which the U.S. Attorney's Office can assist federal crime victims is to recover the monetary losses incurred by those victims during the related crime. This is particularly important in cases involving financial fraud, when victims often lose their retirement funds or their children's college money to a smooth-talking crook. Of course, the government cannot guarantee all losses will be restored, but in Fiscal Year 2010, U.S. Attorney Offices across the country, through their Financial Litigation Units, collected a total of \$300 million in federal restitution for crime victims. During that time in the District of Minnesota, approximately \$2.5 million was collected for individual victims, while more than \$760,000 was collected for victimized federal agencies.

Finally, the federal government assists victims of violent crime by paying for related expenses, such as lost wages, counseling, and medical costs. However, that assistance is not provided by tax dollars. Rather, the funds come from the federal Crime Victims Fund, which is supported through the collection of criminal fines and penalties.

For more information about National Crime Victims' Rights Week, visit <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw>.

The United States Attorney is nominated by the President and approved by Congress to oversee the federal government's interests in civil and criminal proceedings within a specific federal district. There are 93 federal districts in this country, with the District of Minnesota encompassing the entire state. The U. S. Attorney works under the guidance of the United States Attorney General, presently Eric Holder.