

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 158

By Burks

A RESOLUTION to designate the week of April 26-May 2, 2009, as "National Crime Victims' Rights Week" in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, 23 million Americans are victims of crime each year, and, of those, 5.2 million are victims of violent crime; and

WHEREAS, despite the recent reduction in the rate of crime, far too many persons still suffer the impact of crime; and

WHEREAS, crime victims play an indispensable role in bringing offenders to justice; and

WHEREAS, victims of crime are no less deserving of respect, resources, restoration, and justice than the offenders who victimize them; and

WHEREAS, this legislative body recognizes that our response to crime victims plays an important role in their efforts to rebuild their lives following the offenses committed against them; let all of us – policymakers, those in the criminal justice system, counselors, clergy members, and members of the general public – do what we can to respond to victims of crime compassionately and respectfully; and

WHEREAS, while our State has adopted many effective laws to protect the rights of victims of crime and provide them with certain essential services, all of us must do what we can to adhere not only to the letter of victims' rights laws, but to the spirit of those laws as well; let us acknowledge that, just as government must be open to its citizens, so our system of justice must be open to victims of crime; and

WHEREAS, as we carry crime victims' rights into 2009 and beyond, we must recognize "Every Victim, Every Time," striving to pay tribute to crime victims and survivors and recognizing

Tennessee's countless victim service providers who do amazing work for crime victims each day; and

WHEREAS, despite significant progress in providing rights and services to crime victims over the past two decades, large segments of our population, including crime victims who are elderly, disabled, or living in rural areas, are still underserved; and

WHEREAS, the bells of liberty are ringing across America in support of the millions of survivors of crime and their families and advocates, all of whom deserve justice; as a Nation devoted to liberty and justice for all, the United States of America must increase its efforts to protect, restore, and expand crime victims' rights and services; and

WHEREAS, let us acknowledge all of those who work, often as volunteers, on behalf of crime victims, the many law enforcement officers, prosecutors, victim service providers, corrections officers, parole and probation officers, counselors, physicians, health care professionals, and the many others whose dedication and service to crime victims help to lessen their trauma and assist in their personal recoveries; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly admires and appreciates those victims and survivors of crime who have turned personal tragedy into a motivating force, not only to improve the rights and treatment of other victims of crime, but also to build a better, more just community; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee is proud to join forces with victim service programs, criminal justice officials, and concerned citizens throughout Tennessee and the United States of America to observe "National Crime Victims' Rights Week"; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby designate the week of April 26-May 2, 2009, as "National Crime Victims' Rights Week" in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we reaffirm our commitment to address victims' rights and criminal justice issues during the 2009 Tennessee "Crime Victims' Rights Week" and throughout the year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.