**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO DECLARE THE WEEK OF APRIL 21‑27, 2013, AS “CRIME VICTIMS’ RIGHTS WEEK” IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND TO REAFFIRM THIS STATE’S COMMITMENT TO RESPECT AND ENFORCE VICTIMS’ RIGHTS AND ADDRESS THEIR NEEDS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

Whereas, 18.7 million Americans are directly harmed by crime each year, and each crime affects many more family members, friends, neighbors, and co‑workers; and

Whereas, crime can leave a lasting physical, emotional, or financial impact on people of all ages and abilities and all economic, racial, and social backgrounds; and

Whereas, in addition to these challenges, crime victims face a criminal justice system that at times ignores their rights and treats them with disrespect; and

Whereas, in 1982, the President’s Task Force on Victims of Crime envisioned a national commitment to a more equitable and supportive response to victims. The nation heeded this call to action and promoted victims’ rights initiatives, effective and compassionate victim services, and just compensation and financial support; and

Whereas, today, thousands of victim assistance programs provide help and support to child victims of violence and sexual abuse; stalking victims; survivors of homicide victims; victims of drunk‑driving crashes; and victims of domestic, dating, and sexual violence and other crimes; and

Whereas, in the Palmetto State, the South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services created the Office of Victim Services (OVS) in 1986, and it is a pioneer among the nation’s probation/parole agencies in providing direct services to victims. Its primary responsibility is to assist victims of crimes committed by offenders under the supervision of the department; and

Whereas, employees within the OVS are certified through the State Office of Victim Services Education and Certification. OVS endeavors to keep victims informed of the status of their cases. By providing comprehensive, responsive service, OVS helps ease the frustration and anxiety that often accompany the parole and probation process, enables victims to regain a sense of control over their lives, and assists in restoring their quality of life more quickly and effectively; and

Whereas, the people of South Carolina wish to express their appreciation for those victims and crime survivors who have turned personal tragedy into a motivating force to improve our response to victims of crime and build a more just community; and

Whereas, “National Crime Victims’ Rights Week”, April 21‑27, 2013, provides an opportunity to celebrate the energy, creativity, and commitment that launched the victims’ rights movement and inspired its progress, advantages that continue to advance the cause of justice for crime victims; and

Whereas, the House of Representatives is pleased to join forces with victim service providers, criminal justice agencies, and concerned citizens throughout South Carolina and America to raise awareness of victims’ rights and observe “Crime Victims’ Rights Week”. Now therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, by this resolution, declare the week of April 21‑27, 2013, as “Crime Victims’ Rights Week” in South Carolina and reaffirm this state’s commitment to respect and enforce victims’ rights and address their needs throughout the year.

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