



Commonwealth of Virginia

Office of Governor Bob McDonnell

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Contact: Jeff Caldwell
Phone: (804) 225-4260
Email: Jeff.Caldwell@Governor.Virginia.Gov

Governor Bob McDonnell announces Crime Victims' Rights Week

~Governor continues career-long efforts to make Virginia a safer place to raise a family~

RICHMOND – Governor Bob McDonnell recognizes April 22–28, 2012, as Crime Victims' Rights Week in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Crime Victims' Week is an opportunity to raise awareness about issues that affect victims of crime and ensure that we are providing needed services to those who have been victims.

Speaking about the proclamation issued, Governor McDonnell said, "One of the core functions of government is ensuring the safety and security of our citizens. Unfortunately, every year thousands of innocent Virginians suffer from the devastating impact of crime. These victims experience emotional, physical, psychological, and financial harm. While nothing government does can return all that they have lost, we can, and must, do more to help them heal, recover, and move forward. Just as victimization transcends all economic, racial, and social backgrounds, so do the necessary bipartisan efforts to address this problem."

In October 2010, Governor McDonnell established the Domestic Violence Prevention and Response Advisory Board to assist in developing effective measures to aid victims, hold offenders accountable, and prevent future abuse. As a result of this advisory board's diligence and efforts, legislation was introduced by Senator Mark Herring and Delegate Ben Cline during the 2012 General Assembly session to make the act of strangulation a Class 6 felony. Additionally, advisory board members Senator Jill Vogel and Delegate Jennifer McClellan successfully advanced legislation to provide a circuit court the ability to extend permanent protective orders and require immediate data entry into the Virginia Criminal Information Network. Governor McDonnell also introduced legislation that toughens penalties for repeat drug dealers and sex offenders who victimize a child under 13, and his administration continues to work on aggressive re-entry initiatives to rehabilitate offenders and further reduce victimization in our communities.

Governor McDonnell continued, “This week, I will sign an executive order that renews the Domestic Violence Prevention and Response Advisory Board so that this board can continue its efforts to improve our laws, policies, and procedures to enhance Virginia’s response to domestic violence at all levels. My administration remains committed to doing everything possible to ensure that Virginians are safe in their homes and neighborhoods.”

Crime Victims’ Rights Week

WHEREAS, the preservation of peace in our communities and the protection of all citizens of the Commonwealth from violence are fundamental priorities of government; and

WHEREAS, unfortunately, every year thousands of Virginians suffer the indignity of crime and experience emotional, physical, psychological and financial harm as a result of such criminal activity; and

WHEREAS, victimization occurs among people of all ages and abilities and among all economic, racial, and social backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, victim services programs and public safety organizations throughout Virginia provide vital services to victims, including crisis hotlines, emergency shelter, legal advocacy, intervention and programs for children and teenagers; and

WHEREAS, only a few decades ago crime victims experienced prejudice, disrespect, and blame; and

WHEREAS, in November 1996, the Commonwealth adopted a Crime Victims' Bill of Rights to ensure victims are treated with respect, dignity and fairness at all stages of the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, public officials and all citizens of the Commonwealth must continuously strive to improve the services and support for Virginia's crime victims and survivors; and

WHEREAS, National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 22-28, 2012, provides an opportunity to celebrate the decades of progress and hard work, as well as renew the commitment to ensuring that all victims have the rights and services they need to recover from crime; and

WHEREAS, victim services providers, criminal justice officials and concerned citizens throughout Virginia have joined forces to raise awareness of victims' rights and observe National Crime Victims' Rights Week;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Robert F. McDonnell, do hereby recognize April 22-28, 2012 as **CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK** in our **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.

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