



Text File

Introduced: 4/20/2010

Bill No: 2010-0353, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

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Whereas, 21 million Americans suffer the indignity of crime each year and may experience emotional, physical, psychological, and financial harm as a result of such crime;

Whereas, a just nation acknowledges crime's impact on individuals, families, and communities and ensures that victims are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect as they interact with the criminal justice system;

Whereas, 25 years ago, the President's Task Force on Victims of Crime drew attention to the poor treatment of victims in the criminal justice system, calling it "indifferent" to victims' needs;

Whereas, a decades-long struggle to balance the scales of justice resulted in victims' rights laws in every state and more than 32 state constitutional victims' rights amendments that enshrine the ideals of fairness, dignity, and respect for victims of crime;

Whereas, treating victims with dignity serves the public interest by engaging victims in the justice system, inspiring respect for public authorities and promoting confidence in public safety;

Whereas, there is more to be done to advance these ideals as too many victims are denied their right to attend trial, present an impact statement at sentencing, or receive notice of the release of an offender;

Whereas, we must work to ensure fair treatment of crime victims by providing protections for child and sexual assault victims, ordering and enforcing victim restitution from offenders, and notifying victims of their right to compensation and services, thereby giving hope to victims that the system and society will work to restore dignity and respect their needs and rights;

Whereas, National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 18-24, 2010, provides an opportunity for us to raise awareness of the foundation of victims' rights-fairness, dignity, and respect-and to recommit to honoring those values by ensuring that all victims are afforded their legal rights and provided with assistance as they face the financial, physical, and psychological impact of crime; and

Whereas, The City of Pittsburgh is joining forces with victim service programs, criminal justice officials, and concerned citizens throughout Pittsburgh and America to raise awareness of victims' rights and observe National Crime Victims' Rights Week; and

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the City of Pittsburgh's commitment to respect and enforce victims' rights and address their needs during Crime Victims' Rights Week and throughout the year; and Express our 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 to build a more just community.

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