



THIS SPRING

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Rally begins Victims Rights Week

Victims of crime remembered in vigil

By Daniel Gonzalez
The Arizona Republic
April 10, 2000

Christy Parker of Glendale was shaking as she described the nightmare that will haunt her the rest of her life.

One day in March 1998, her husband, Wayne Prince, a man with a history of domestic violence, shot her with a .22-caliber pistol, shattering her jaw. He also used the gun to kill Parker's 13-year-old daughter, Cassie, as she lay in bed.

"I am not afraid of dying. It's the living that scares me," Parker told about 300 people who gathered Sunday in a park across from the state Capitol.

The rally was held to remember the thousands of people victimized by crime in Arizona every year as well as to honor the professionals who help them rebuild their lives.

Sunday's rally, which was followed by a vigil in front of the Capitol in remembrance of murder victims, marked the beginning of [Victims Rights Week](#).

There was an added air of significance at this year's rally and vigil because later this month the U.S. Senate is scheduled to debate a bill that would attempt to put victims rights on equal footing with the rights of criminal defendants. It would add a crime victims rights amendment to the U.S. Constitution, a controversial proposal that would require passage by two-thirds majority vote of both the House and Senate and then adoption by three-fourths of the states.

U.S. Senator Jon Kyl, R-Ariz., a longtime advocate of victims rights, is sponsoring the bill.

Kyl, who spoke at the rally, said that although criminal defendants are guaranteed the right to a speedy trial and other rights under the U.S. Constitution, crime victims are frequently denied the right to attend criminal proceedings.

In the past 20 years, Kyl said, 32 states have added victims rights amendments to their own constitutions, but despite the measures judges and prosecutors still fail to notify crime



Emmanuel Lozano/The Arizona Republic

A rally at the state Capitol remembers victims of crime. A mother's T-shirt recalls her daughter.

victims about criminal proceedings.

Arizona adopted a criminal rights amendment in 1990 but some cases still fall through the cracks, Kyle said.

"This crime victims rights amendment will establish a national baseline of rights that will be the birthright of every American," victim advocate Steve Twist said.

The proposed amendment is scheduled to be debated by the Senate on April 25 and 26.

In 1999, 31,900 people in Maricopa County were victimized by crimes, said Jamie Mabery, who runs the victim witness division of the Maricopa County Attorney's Office.

Parker is now divorced from her husband. He was convicted of first-degree murder and is awaiting sentencing.

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Ethan St. John, 5, wears a shirt with a picture of his cousin, A. Ted Celaya II, who was shot to death in July 1998.