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April 21, 2000

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IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
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Attorney General of Mississippi

Honorable Jon Kyl
United States Senate
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Kyl and Feinstein:

We are writing to express our strong and unequivocal support for your efforts to pass S. J. Res. 3, the proposed Crime Victims' Rights Amendment, and send it on to the States for ratification.

As Attorneys General from diverse regions and populations in our nation, we continue to see a common denominator in the treatment of crime victims throughout the country. Despite the best intentions of our laws, too often crime victims are still denied basic rights to fair treatment and due process that should be the birthright of every citizen who seeks justice through our courts. We are convinced that statutory protections are not enough; only a federal constitutional amendment will be sufficient to change the culture of our legal system.

The rights you propose in S. J. Res. 3 are moderate, fair, and yet profound. They will extend to crime victims a meaningful opportunity to participate in each critical stage of their cases. At the same time, they will not infringe on the fundamental rights of those accused or convicted of offenses. Neither will these rights interfere with the proper functioning of law enforcement. Attorney General Reno spoke for many of us in law enforcement when she noted,

[T]he President and I have concluded that a victims' rights amendment would benefit not only crime victims but also law enforcement. To operate effectively, the criminal justice system relies on victims to report crimes committed against them, to cooperate with the law enforcement authorities investigating those crimes, and to provide evidence at trial. Victims will be that much more willing to participate in this process if they perceive that we are striving to treat them with respect and to recognize their central place in any prosecution.

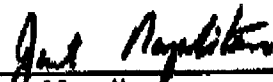
Some have argued that federal constitutional rights for victims will infringe on important principles of federalism. We disagree. Each of our state criminal justice systems accommodates federal rights for defendants. To provide a similar floor of rights for victims is a matter of basic fairness.

Please share this letter with your colleagues so that they may know of our strong support for S. J. Res. 3.

Sincerely,



Bill Pryor
Attorney General of Alabama



Janet Napolitano
Attorney General of Arizona



Bill Lockyer
Attorney General of California



Ken Salazar
Attorney General of Colorado




Richard Blumenthal
Attorney General of Connecticut




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Attorney General of Delaware





Robert A. Butterworth
Attorney General of Florida

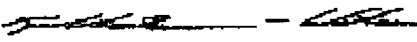



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Attorney General of Maryland


Jennifer Granholm
Attorney General of Michigan

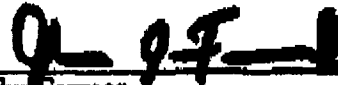

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Mike Moore
Attorney General of Mississippi

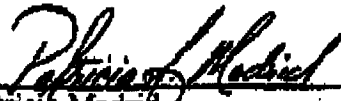

Joseph P. Mazurek
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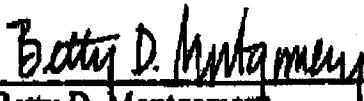
John Farmer
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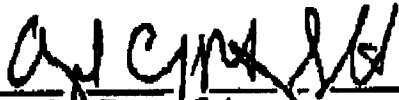
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Senators Kyl and Feinstein

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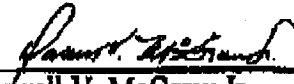
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Attorney General of Alaska

cc: All United States Senators