

tons of mud and rock fell in a landslide. As a result of this catastrophe, the nation mourned the deaths of as many as 36 while over 60 are still missing.

Only 4 days later, a 6.1 magnitude earthquake shook the capital region of Costa Rica, resulting in the destruction of over 500 homes and the deaths of at least 20.

I join my colleagues today to express my sincere sympathy and our sincere sympathy and support to our Latin American friends who have suffered as a result of these disasters. I would like to commend the courage and perseverance of the Costa Rican and Guatemalan Governments, along with the private citizens and relief organizations who worked tirelessly in the rescue effort. The prompt humanitarian response carried out in the aftermath of these disasters clearly contributed to the ability of these nations to overcome the damage wrought by these two tragedies.

As I said before, I would like to thank Mr. SCOTT for cosponsoring this, and I would like to thank our chairman, Mr. BERMAN, and our ranking member, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN of Florida, for helping move this important resolution to the floor. And, again, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the Guatemalan and Costa Rican people and their families who suffered as a result of these horrible disasters.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I certainly again want to commend Mr. BURTON for showing the leadership and at the same time showing the greatness of America, which has always been the timely response to other nations in their moment of great need and crisis.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 76, "Mourning the horrific loss of life in January 2009 caused by a landslide in Guatemala and an earthquake in Costa Rica and expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should assist the affected people and communities." I would like to thank my colleague, Representative DAN BURTON, for introducing this legislation.

Natural disasters are one of the most difficult things to deal with as a nation. As a Representative of Houston, TX I have seen devastation and heartbreak come from devastating natural disasters. Our city alone has faced and returned stronger after natural disasters like tropical storm Allison, as her waters flooded our streets and entered our homes. Within the past few years the people of the 18th Congressional District of Texas dealt with damage and evacuation troubles when shortly after a storm called Katrina ripped through the homes of our neighbors, Hurricane Rita threatened our city and our lives. Most recently, we had the electricity taken from our city, roofs stripped from our houses, and windows shattered into our living rooms. Because of Hurricane Ike our city has seen the impact of horrific situations before and after natural disasters ravage through our streets. These challenges, although largely difficult to recover from, already would have been virtually impos-

sible to recover from had the Federal Government not assisted.

The landslides in Guatemala claimed the lives of more than 30 people and caused destruction to many in this small country. The unfortunate loss of these men and women shall not only be remembered here today as we acknowledge this House resolution, but should be remembered everyday as the people of Guatemala try to recover from the devastation caused by this event. These events take time to recover from and in time just as the sadness fades the recovery will begin in this region.

Just like the people of Guatemala the people in Costa Rica did not expect the ground to start shaking bringing buildings to the ground. With over 14 lives claimed and dozens of people still missing the people of Costa Rica have been devastated by the effects the earthquake has brought them. The 6.2 magnitude earthquake shook the lives of all the people living in Costa Rica and like the people of Guatemala the wounds will take time to heal.

I have experienced firsthand the devastation of events like these and understand the difficulty in recovering from them. These people deserve all the help they can get. It is our moral responsibility to assist in any way we can in helping these countries rebuild. Supporting H. Res. 76 is a big step in helping these devastated nations. That is why I support H. Res. 76, "Mourning the horrific loss of life in January 2009 caused by a landslide in Guatemala and an earthquake in Costa Rica and expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should assist the affected people and communities" and I urge my colleagues to do so as well.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 76, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title was amended so as to read: "A resolution mourning the horrific loss of life in January 2009 caused by a landslide in Guatemala and an earthquake in Costa Rica."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 109) supporting the mission and goals of 2009 National Crime Victims' Rights week to increase public awareness of the rights, needs, and concerns of victims and survivors of crime in the United States, and to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the enactment of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 109

Whereas 25,000,000 individuals in the United States are victims of crime each year, including over 6,000,000 victims of violent crime;

Whereas a just society acknowledges the impact of crime on individuals, families, and communities by ensuring that rights, resources, and services are available to help rebuild lives;

Whereas although our Nation has steadily expanded rights, protections, and services for victims of crime, too many victims are still not able to realize the hope and promise of these gains;

Whereas our Nation must do more to ensure that services are available for underserved segments of the population, including crime victims with disabilities, victims with mental illness, and victims who are teenagers, elderly, or from urban and rural areas or communities of color;

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

Whereas the people of the United States recognize that we make our homes, neighborhoods, and communities safer and stronger by serving victims of crime and ensuring justice for all;

Whereas 2009 marks the 25th anniversary of the enactment of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 ("VOCA"), the hallmark of the Federal Government's recognition of its commitment to supporting rights and services for victims of crime through the establishment of the Crime Victims Fund, that is paid for by criminal fines and penalties, rather than by taxpayers' dollars;

Whereas, since its inception, the Crime Victims Fund has collected more than \$9,000,000,000 from offender fines and penalties to be used exclusively to help victims of crime;

Whereas VOCA supports direct assistance and financial compensation to more than 4,000,000 victims of crime every year;

Whereas VOCA's imaginative transformation of offender fines into programs of victim rehabilitation has inspired similar programs throughout the worldwide crime victims' movement;

Whereas the theme of 2009 National Crime Victims' Right Week, celebrated April 26, 2009, through May 2, 2009, is "25 Years of Rebuilding Lives: Celebrating the Victims of Crime Act", which highlights VOCA's significant achievements and contributions in advancing rights and services for all crime victims; and

Whereas National Crime Victims' Rights Week provides an opportunity for the Nation to strive to reach the goal of justice for all by ensuring that all victims are afforded legal rights and provided with assistance to face the financial, physical, spiritual, psychological, and social impact of crime: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the mission and goals of 2009 National Crime Victims' Rights Week to increase public awareness of the impact of crime on victims and survivors, and of the constitutional and statutory rights and needs;

(2) recognizes the 25th anniversary of the enactment of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984; and

(3) directs the Clerk of the House of Representatives to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to the Office for Victims of Crime within the Office of Justice Programs of the Department of Justice.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

House Res. 109 supports the goals and mission of National Crime Victims' Rights week, which is being celebrated this week, April 26 through May 2, 2009. The 2009 National Crime Victims' Rights week theme is "25 Years of Rebuilding Lives: Celebrating the Victims of Crime Act."

Mr. Speaker, each year for the last 25 years, the Office of Victims of Crime in the Department of Justice has observed National Crime Victims' Rights week along with individuals and communities across the country. Victims' rights and crime victims are honored with rallies, candlelight vigils, and other commemorative events.

This week in April is an important time to increase public awareness about the needs and concerns of the 25 million victims and survivors of crime each year, of which over 6 million are victims of violent crimes.

During National Crime Victims' Rights week, people are asked to take time out to acknowledge the impact that crime has on families, individuals, and communities by ensuring that resources and services are available to help crime victims rebuild their lives.

We would also like to acknowledge the 25 years of contributions that the Office of Victims of Crime has made to supporting victims of both violent and nonviolent crime. A major aspect of the office's work has been the creation and supervision of the Crime Victims Fund. This fund is paid for by criminal fines and penalties and supplemented with general tax revenue as needed. Over the last 25 years, the Crime Victims Fund has collected more than \$9 billion from offender fines and penalties, which is used solely to assist crime victims. Each year these funds support direct services and financial compensation to more than 4 million victims of crime.

This week is also a time to make a commitment to providing more resources and services to crime victims who live in underserved areas such as urban and rural areas. This is also time to pay special attention to victims of crime who suffer from physical and mental disabilities in addition to child and senior citizens who may be victims of crime.

Mr. Speaker, we should be doing more to invest in crime prevention and therefore reducing the number of victims, but meanwhile this resolution gives us the opportunity to celebrate victims' rights and their dignity. We should ensure that victims are treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve, and doing that will promote a fair and just criminal justice system. For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1430

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleague and friend Mr. COSTA from California as an original sponsor of this resolution to recognize and support the mission and goals of National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Together, Mr. COSTA and myself chair the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus. The caucus is comprised of Members from both sides of the aisle who are dedicated to protecting the interests and needs of crime victims throughout our country. Crime victim issues are not partisan. They are nonpartisan issues, Mr. Speaker, and affect everyone in this country.

In 1980, President Ronald Reagan first called for a national observance to recognize and honor the millions of crime victims and those survivors in this country. Since then, Victims' Rights Week has been proclaimed annually with ceremonies and observances here in Washington, D.C. and thousands of communities throughout the Nation.

Each April, the Office for Victims of Crime, called the OVC, organizes a weeklong series of activities and rallies to increase public awareness of the rights, the needs and concerns of crime victims in the United States. The theme of this year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week is "25 Years of Rebuilding Lives: Celebrating the Victims of Crime Act."

In 1984, the Victims of Crime Act, called VOCA, created the VOCA fund, a Federal victims compensation account funded by fines assessed in Federal criminal convictions. This is a collection of criminal fines, not taxpayer dollars.

The way it works, Mr. Speaker, criminals convicted in Federal Court contribute into a fund, as I say paying for the crimes they have committed, paying rent on the courthouse, and that fund is used exclusively for victims and victims' services throughout the United States. It is not a taxpayer-funded fund; it is a fund solely funded by criminals. What a novel idea: Make criminals pay to the victims of crime, victims that many of them have caused to be victims in the first place.

Also the Victims of Crime Act establishes the Office for Victims of Crime

to distribute those funds throughout the United States. In fact, with the help of the OVC, there are now 10,000 victim assistance programs providing emotional, financial, physical and spiritual support every day. All of these organizations owe to some extent their existence because of the VOCA funds that were established by Congress many years ago.

VOCA is the only Federal fund that caters to the needs of victims. Each year, about 4,400 agencies and almost 3.5 million victims receive support and financial compensation from this fund funded by criminals. Just to clarify, this money that is collected is used to help victims and their families.

This year, during National Crime Victims' Rights Week, we celebrate that the VOCA fund has been assisting victims for over 25 years and has distributed literally billions of dollars since its inception. Currently there are \$6.5 billion in this fund, funds that will be given to victims and victims services. It is important that we as Members of Congress make sure that the bureaucrats, however, don't see this fund and take the fund and use it for other services in the United States that have nothing to do with victims.

While the events of this week provide excellent opportunities to focus on victims' rights, this issue requires attention by Members of Congress so that the VOCA fund is not taken by the bureaucrats and used for other purposes.

Last month, four police officers in Oakland, California, Dan Sakai, 35, Mark Dunakin, 40, John Hege, 41, and Ervin Romans, 43, were shot to death by a 27-year-old parolee. Earlier this month, an armed man walked into a New York Immigration and Naturalization service center and shot 17 people, killing 13 and wounding four others.

The National Center For Victims of Crime reports that during 2008 a child was reported abused or neglected almost every 35 seconds. In my home State of Texas alone, there were more than 83,000 separate allegations of abuse or neglect confirmed by Child Protective Services.

Crime victims, Mr. Speaker, are not statistics. They are real men, women and children with families and loved ones, and those victims who manage to survive the acts of violence must not be excluded from the criminal justice system. Their voices must be heard, and in honor of every victim, we renew our commitment to protect the rights of crime victims and provide them effective assistance programs, and we also commend the countless professionals and volunteers who have dedicated literally their lives to help victims and survivors of crime.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the chief sponsor of the legislation who, along with Mr. POE, introduced

this important resolution, the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA).

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Virginia for his leadership and his support for this important House Resolution, H. Res. 109, which I rise today to introduce.

As has been stated by my colleagues, this resolution supports the mission and goals of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, to designate this week, April 26 to May 2, as National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Congressman TED POE and I introduced this resolution on behalf of our fellow Victims' Rights Caucus members who have been supportive of our efforts over the last 4 years.

As was noted, in 1980 President Reagan first called for the national observance to recognize and honor the millions of victims and their families and survivors who have been victims, sadly, of crime in America.

This year, we mark the 25th anniversary of the enactment of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, better known as VOCA. This legislation has supported rights and services for crime victims for the last 25 years, and quite successfully. It has done it without the use of a single dime from American taxpayer dollars.

The Victims of Crime Act, the VOCA funds, are supported by fines and penalties that come from the criminals who have perpetrated these crimes. These funds are used by State and local organizations to help people through their difficult time periods after experiencing a crime that they have been victimized by. There are over 4,400 agencies across the country which depend upon VOCA funding. These agencies serve near in excess of 3.5 million crime victims each year, sadly.

This resolution also honors the lives that have been rebuilt over the last 25 years as a result of all the good efforts by these local agencies throughout our country. These are millions of people working in victim organizations who have dedicated their lives to assisting people through these terrible, terrible time periods, and each and every one of them I think deserves a thank you from all of us as Members of Congress.

When I arrived in Washington, Congressman POE and I discovered that there was not a caucus that was dedicated for the purpose of recognizing those victims of crime. So Congressman TED POE and I decided to form a new bipartisan congressional caucus that would provide a louder voice for all the advocacy groups who advocate on behalf of victims of crime.

The Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus, of which I am proud to be a co-chair of, frankly, has done a lot of good efforts over the last 4 years, and we encourage Members who are listening and their staff who are not members of this bipartisan congressional caucus that you join our efforts.

We have three simple goals. The first is to represent crime victims in the United States through bipartisan in-

roduction of legislation that reflects the interests, rights and needs of victims of crime. Two, our goal is to provide an ongoing forum for proactive discussion between Congress and national victims' assistance organizations to enhance mutual education and legislation advocacy and initiatives which promote justice for all, including the victims of crime. Three, to seek opportunities for public education initiatives to help people in the United States understand the impact of crime on victims and to encourage their involvement in crime prevention, which is the best sort of effort we can possibly do. An ounce of prevention, as we all know, is worth a pound of cure. And also to provide victim assistance and community safety throughout our neighborhoods across this great land of ours.

I want to thank again the gentleman from Virginia. I want to thank Congressman TED POE, my cochair of the caucus, for all of your efforts on behalf of Members who work on behalf of those who are victims of crime.

Finally, my fellow colleagues, crime, as we know, knows no boundary, knows no demographic, or congressional district boundary. Sadly, crime affects in some capacity all Americans at some point in life.

When our families, when our friends and when our neighbors are in need of assistance after a crime, they should not be met with a closed door, but they should be met with open arms. We all have a responsibility. This is not simply the domain of local law enforcement agencies, which play a tremendous role, but we as Americans all have a responsibility to help out in our communities.

So I want to thank those members of the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus, I want to thank those who support this resolution, H. Res. 109, and encourage all of my colleagues to support important legislation that we will pursue in the 111th Congress.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman from Virginia for leading this resolution, but also I do want to thank my friend from California, Mr. COSTA, for not only sponsoring this legislation, but for his hard work nationally on victims' rights and the movement. He literally started the victims' rights movement in California, the State that we owe a lot to for the victims' right movement when he was in the State legislature there in California, and he has brought his passion to help victims of crime to the United States Congress, and we are all better for that.

Last week in honor of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, the Victim's Rights Caucus, as Mr. COSTA mentioned, had several preliminary events. One was the fourth annual Victim's Rights Caucus awards ceremony.

At the awards ceremony last Wednesday night, Mr. COSTA and myself joined

other Members of the House, Mr. SHAD-EGG from Arizona, Mr. YARMUTH from Kentucky and Mr. REICHERT from Washington in honoring six outstanding victim advocates and victim programs.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the names and the awards of these six recipients.

2009 VICTIMS' RIGHTS CAUCUS AWARDS
RECIPIENTS

(1) Suzanne McDaniel Public Awareness Award—Katherine Cabaniss. Ms. Cabaniss is the Executive Director of Houston Crime Stoppers. As a former Assistant District Attorney, she has a passion for preventing and fighting crime. During her time with Crime Stoppers, Ms. Cabaniss has built strategic alliances with people and organizations who assist victims of crime, including local school districts, apartment property management companies, and women's shelters. She has strengthened Crime Stoppers relationship with the media, and in doing so, has used her voice to promote safe communities and justice for victims of crime. Cabaniss was nominated by Representative Ted Poe (TX-02).

(2) Ed Stout Memorial Award for Outstanding Victim Advocacy—Alliance Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault. The Alliance represents everything that Mr. Stout worked so hard for during his work on behalf of crime victims and survivors. They are a nonprofit, grassroots organization that since 1979 has provided support and services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Kern County and the surrounding area. These services are free, and are bilingual, which serves Kern County's diverse ethnic background. Their strong focus on assisting victims of violence against women in rural areas is remarkable. The Alliance Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault was nominated by Representative Jim Costa (CA-20).

(3) Ed Stout Memorial Award for Outstanding Victim Advocacy—Sheryl Cates. Ms. Cates has spent the last 25 years advocating for victims of domestic violence at all levels. As Executive Director at Women's Protective Services in Lubbock, TX, Ms. Cates worked directly with victims as well as supervising staff who provide services to victims. Also, as CEO of the Texas council on Family Violence, National Domestic Violence Hotline and loveisrespect.org National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline, Ms. Cates is recognized nationally as an expert in the field of domestic violence and as someone who can be counted on to participate in any efforts to support the needs of victims and their families. Cates was nominated by Representative Lamar Smith (TX-21)

(4) Lois Haight Award of Excellence and Innovation—Steve Twist. Mr. Twist has worked tirelessly to ensure that every jurisdiction in America provides victims with rights in the criminal justice system and that those rights are enforceable by the individual victim. He has worked as counsel to the Navajo Nation, aiding in the drafting of various victim provisions, and is the principal author of the Arizona constitutional amendment for victims' rights and the Arizona Victims' Rights Implementation Act, which together are the strongest victims' rights legal provisions in the country. Mr. Twist was nominated by Representative John Shadegg (AZ-03)

(5) Eva Murillo Unsung Hero Award—Jenny Wieland. Ms. Wieland's 17 year old daughter and only child was murdered by another teen in 1992. She turned her pain into purpose and has worked tirelessly to reduce youth violence, in hopes that other mothers

would not have to experience the loss of a child to a violent crime. In 1994, Jenny Wieland became a founding board member of Mothers Against Violence in America (MAVIA). In early 1995, she left a career as an insurance broker to become MAVIA's Program Director and first employee. During her seven-year tenure with MAVIA, she helped create and implement MAVIA's many national and local programs, including the acclaimed Washington State model of Day of National Concern About Young People and Gun Violence, which encourages young Americans in classrooms and communities across the country to sign the Student Pledge Against Gun Violence. Currently, Wieland is serving as Executive Director of Families and Friends of Violent Crime Victims in Washington State. Wieland was nominated by Representative Dave Reichert (WA-08).

(6) Allied Profession Award—Michael Davis, President of Appriss, Inc. Mr. Davis is the cofounder and president of Appriss, the provider of local, state and federal automated victim information and notification services and automated victim protection order services. In 1994, Mary Byron was murdered on her 21st birthday by her former boyfriend who was in jail in Louisville, Kentucky. Mary and her parents asked to be notified if and when he was released, which did not happen. In response to this preventable tragedy, Davis and his partner created VINE® (Victim Information and Notification Everyday), which provides confidential, around-the-clock notifications to victims about the status of their offenders. VINE keeps crime victims and survivors informed and involved in their cases, in turn promoting personal and community safety. Today, Appriss provides VINE and related services to more than 75% of our nation. States participating in the Statewide Automated Victim Information and Notification (SAVIN) grant program have entrusted Appriss as their technology provider. Davis was nominated by Representative John Yarmuth (KY-03).

Mr. POE of Texas. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to a strong supporter of victims, a former law enforcement officer, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK).

Mr. STUPAK. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. COSTA, for introducing this resolution. As a former Escanaba City police officer, a Michigan State police trooper and as an attorney, I saw every day the effect of crime on our citizens. Crime leaves its victims feeling unsafe in their own communities and vulnerable to the often complicated judicial system.

As the cochairman of the Law Enforcement Caucus, I know that when a crime is committed, our law enforcement agencies work hard so the criminal is brought to justice. But there is another part to the equation. The victim of crime must be provided with assistance and support to recover from this often traumatic experience.

Our law enforcement agencies work with the court system to ensure that victims of crime are treated fairly and with respect to one's dignity and privacy. We must step up to the plate and show our strong commitment to the

criminal justice system by ensuring that victims of crimes feel safe in their own communities.

The creation of the National Crime Victims' Crime Week is a good first step to increase public awareness of the rights and needs of victims of crime. Congress should go even further by ensuring the legal protections are in place to protect victims of crime.

During the National Law Enforcement Week in May, I will introduce an amendment to the United States Constitution to protect the rights of all victims. I hope you will join me in ensuring our Constitution explicitly supports the rights of victims of crime.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of House Resolution 109 to create the National Crime Victims' Rights Week of 2009 and to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the enactment of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is because of the pioneering efforts of many, including President Reagan and his 1982 Task Force on Victims of Crime, that we are able to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Victims of Crime Act. We must remember that the same Constitution that protects the rights of offenders protects the rights of victims of crime in this country as well.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting in resolution.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from California, the gentleman from Texas, as well as the gentleman from Michigan, for their work on behalf of victims of crime, and I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 109, supporting the mission and goals of 2009 National Crime Victims' Rights week to increase public awareness of the rights, needs, an concerns of victims and survivors of crime in the United States, and to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the enactment of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984. I thank Congressman COSTA, Congressman POE, Congresswoman MATSUI, Congressman MARCHANT, and Congressman MORAN for introducing this meaningful resolution which recognizes and acknowledges the over 25 million individuals that are victims of crimes each year in this country. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution. As members of Congress, we need to acknowledge the impact of crime on individuals, families, and communities and we need to ensure that rights, resources, and services are available to help rebuild lives.

This resolution is important because while our nation has steadily, and rightfully, expanded rights, protections and services for victims of crimes, too many victims are still not able to realize the hope and promise of the gains. Our country must do more to ensure that services are available for underserved segments of the population, including crime victims with disabilities, victims with mental illness, and victims who are teenagers, elderly, or from urban and rural areas or communities of color. According the National Center for Victims:

One person is murdered every 31 minutes.
One person is raped every 1.9 minutes.
One person is assaulted every 36.9 seconds.

One home is burglarized every 18 seconds.
One woman is victimized by an intimate partner every 52 seconds.

One child is reported abused or neglected every 34.9 seconds.

One person is killed in an alcohol-related crash every 40.4 minutes.

One person becomes a victim of identity theft every 4.9 seconds.

One elderly person is victimized by a violent crime every 4.2 minutes.

We must observe victims' rights and treat victims with dignity and respect and engage them in the justice system, which will also further gain respect for public authorities and promote confidence in public safety. The people of this country will be safer and stronger by serving victims of crime and ensuring justice for all.

It is necessary that we, as members of Congress, mark the anniversary of the enactment of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984. This Act is the hallmark of the Federal Government's recognition of its commitment to supporting rights and services for victims of all types of crime through the establishment of the Crime Victims Fund. This fund is paid by criminal fines and penalties, not tax payer dollars. The fund has collected more than \$9 billion from offender fines and penalties to be used exclusively to help victims of crime. These funds have aided the more than 4 million victims of crime a year. The money provides medical care, counseling and funeral costs. This act has encouraged other programs to also transfer offender fines into help for victim rehabilitation.

The theme of the 2009 National Crime Victim's right Week, celebrated April 26–May 2, 2009 is "25 years of Rebuilding Lives: Celebrating the Victims of Crime Act". This theme highlights the Act's significant achievements and contributions in advancing rights and services for all crime victims. This week will provide an opportunity for the nation to strive to reach the goal of justice for all by ensuring that all victims are afforded legal rights and provided with assistance to face the financial, physical, spiritual, psychological and social impact of crime.

I encourage my colleagues to pass this resolution so that we can increase the public awareness of the impact of crime on victims and survivors, and of the constitutional and statutory rights and needs of victims of crime. This resolution will recognize the 25th anniversary of the enactment of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984. It will also direct the clerk of the House of Representatives to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to the Office for Victims of Crime within the Office of Justice Programs of the Department of Justice.

In Harris County, within the 18th District of Texas, which I proudly represent, the Houston Mayor's Crime Victims Office has a saying, "Crime victims are the only unwilling participants in our criminal justice system; everyone else chooses their own roles. Victims' rights are often a mere courtesy, while defendants' rights—and rightfully so—are protected in our Constitution. Victims' rights deserve the same protection." While Harris County is fortunate to have some of the Nation's finest victim service organizations, such as the Houston Area

Women's Center, Parents of Murdered Children, AVDA, MADD and Family Time, as well as victim liaisons staffed from our criminal justice partners it is far from immune from crime. The Harris County Victim Witness Division, alone, assisted over 30,000 victims of crime last year and helped them receive \$16.9 million in restitution.

I have been and continue to be an advocate for victims of crime most importantly with my latest legislation, H.R. 262, the David Ray Ritcheson Hate Crime Prevention Act which I also introduced in the 110th Congress. I twice sponsored a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the people of the United States should grieve for the loss of life that defined the Third Reich and celebrate the continued education efforts for tolerance and justice, reaffirming the commitment of United States to fight against intolerance and prejudice in any form, and honoring the legacy of transparent procedure, government accountability, the rule of law, the pursuit of justice, and the struggle for universal freedom and human rights. Additionally, I sponsored H.R. 5610, in the 109th Congress, the Foreign Anti-Sex Offender Protection Act of 2006. I have co-sponsored numerous bills that benefit victims of crimes.

Nobody wants, or deserves, to be a victim of crime. I urge my colleagues to pass this Resolution and acknowledge and support these unfortunate victims.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 109.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

□ 1445

SUPPORTING NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 104) supporting the goals and ideals of National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 104

Whereas on average, a person is sexually assaulted in the United States every two-and-a-half minutes;

Whereas the Department of Justice reports that 191,670 people in the United States were sexually assaulted in 2005;

Whereas 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men have been victims of rape or attempted rape;

Whereas the Department of Defense received 2,688 reports of sexual assault involving members of the Armed Forces in fiscal year 2007;

Whereas children and young adults are most at risk of sexual assault, as 44 percent of sexual assault victims are under the age of 18, and 80 percent are under the age of 30;

Whereas sexual assault affects women, men, and children of all racial, social, religious, age, ethnic, and economic groups in the United States;

Whereas only 41 percent of sexual assault victims pursue prosecution by reporting their attack to law enforcement agencies;

Whereas two-thirds of sexual crimes are committed by persons who are not strangers to the victims;

Whereas sexual assault survivors suffer emotional scars long after the physical scars have healed;

Whereas prevention education programs carried out by rape crisis and women's health centers have the potential to reduce the prevalence of sexual assault in their communities;

Whereas because of recent advances in DNA technology, law enforcement agencies have the potential to identify the rapists in tens of thousands of unsolved rape cases;

Whereas aggressive prosecution can incarcerate rapists and therefore prevent them from committing further crimes;

Whereas free, confidential help is available to all survivors of sexual assault through the National Sexual Assault Hotline, more than 1,000 rape crisis centers across the United States, and other organizations that provide services to assist survivors of sexual assault; and

Whereas April is recognized as "National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That—

(1) it is the sense of Congress that—

(A) National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month provides a special opportunity to educate the people of the United States about sexual violence and to encourage the prevention of sexual assault, the improved treatment of its survivors, and the prosecution of its perpetrators;

(B) it is appropriate to properly acknowledge the more than 20,000,000 men and women who have survived sexual assault in the United States and salute the efforts of survivors, volunteers, and professionals who combat sexual assault;

(C) national and community organizations and private sector supporters should be recognized and applauded for their work in promoting awareness about sexual assault, providing information and treatment to its survivors, and increasing the number of successful prosecutions of its perpetrators; and

(D) public safety, law enforcement, and health professionals should be recognized and applauded for their hard work and innovative strategies to increase the percentage of sexual assault cases that result in the prosecution and incarceration of the offenders;

(2) Congress strongly recommends national and community organizations, businesses in the private sector, colleges and universities, and the media to promote, through National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, awareness of sexual violence and strategies to decrease the incidence of sexual assault; and

(3) Congress supports the goals and ideals of National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) and the gen-

tleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the gentlelady from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), as well as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), for introducing this important resolution, and I rise in support to acknowledge the impact that sexual assault has on its victims and to promote education about and prevention of sexual assault.

This resolution highlights the immense problem of sexual assault in the United States. A person is sexually assaulted in the United States every 2½ minutes. Almost 18 million women, 1 in 6, have been victims of rape or attempted rape, and almost 3 million men, 1 in 33, have also been victims.

Sexual assault also harms the society. Medical expenses, lost productivity, treatment of psychological trauma and pain and suffering cost victims roughly \$127 billion per year.

It can also lead to long-term health problems such as chronic pain and headaches and stomach problems and sexually transmitted diseases, and can leave victims with emotional issues which can lead to depression and even suicide.

Designating April to be Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month is an important step in recognizing the problem. Highlighting and focusing on this issue gives us the opportunity to educate the public and allows us to praise the survivors, as well as the volunteers and professionals who have dedicated their lives to combating sexual assault.

I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POE of Texas. I yield myself such time as I may consume, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to join my Judiciary Committee colleague, the gentlelady from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) as an original sponsor on this resolution. I want to thank her for her efforts in presenting this to Congress. I would like to thank her for reintroducing House Concurrent Resolution 104 to recognize April as National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

Every 2½ minutes a person is sexually assaulted in the United States. Sadly, 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men have been victims of rape or attempted rape. Two-thirds of these assaults are committed by someone that is actually