(letter – to be sent to local/weekly newspapers, etc.)

Crime does not discriminate.

Crime, including domestic violence, DUI, sexual assault and elder abuse, can happen anytime – anywhere – to anyone, regardless of age, race, or income.

But what you may not know is that there are programs and services – **free of charge** - to help victims of crime here in Pennsylvania, including counseling, compensation assistance, court accompaniment and more.

A recent Penn State University poll found that **48 %** of Pennsylvanians are not aware of how--or where –- to access services for victims of crime where they live. In fact, **less than half** of respondents to the poll were not aware that these services are free…and **fewer than 25 percent of all Pennsylvanians** were aware of the Victims Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP). This program helps eligible victims of crime and their family members with financial compensation. Eligible expenses can include medical and counseling costs, loss of earnings, loss of support, stolen cash, relocation and funeral or crime scene clean up costs.

Across our state, and in each county, trained victim service providers help crime victims begin the path to healing, provide emotional and psychological support, assist victims with filing compensation claims, and act as an advocate in many ways, following the occurrence of the crime.

The current economic circumstances many across our state are experiencing can exacerbate situations where domestic violence and sexual assault are occurring. It's vital that all Pennsylvanians be aware of what services are available to them and where to go for help.

Advocacy, counseling and other services are available in each of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania. To find out more, please visit the Pennsylvania Crime Victims website at www.pacrimevictims.com.

These services are free and confidential – victim service providers are here to help you recover and heal from the devastating effects of crime.

For more information, please contact the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency toll free at (800) 233-2339.

Bulletin announcement for churches

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(note that **this** one is dated)

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National Crime Victims' Rights Awareness Week is April 18-24. In Pennsylvania, victims of crime can receive ***free and confidential services*** *to help them heal in the aftermath of crime, including advocacy, counseling, court accompaniment and more. These services are available in each of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania.*

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