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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE JOINS IN COMMEMORATING NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

District Attorney Kristine Russell and the Lafourche Parish District Attorney's Office will be commemorating National Crime Victim's Rights Week from April 8th through the 14th, 2018.

"Our focus as prosecutors is always on the victims of crime, and the particular harm they suffer," said Russell. "During National Crime Victim's Rights Week, we want to make sure everyone in our community knows that those who fight for justice have dedicated resources to help victims of crime. In Lafourche Parish, that includes my office and our local law enforcement agencies.

"Our state constitution guarantees that victims be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. We have to be ever-vigilant in protecting those rights. Too often, victims and their families feel lost in the criminal justice system.

"We support the efforts of the U.S. Department of Justice in promoting a better understanding of victim's rights in our communities," Russell said. "Through our own victims' rights office, we have always worked to give victims a voice in the prosecution of a crime, and to make them aware of their own constitutional rights.

"But we know victims need more than just what the law requires. That's why we are expanding our victims' rights office, and adding professional counselling services. The impact of crime stays with victims long past conviction and sentencing. Sometimes it stays with them for the rest of their lives. This week, we want to tell victims that we are here for them not only now, but whenever they need us in the future."

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According to the most recent Bureau of Justice Statistics survey, victims in the United States experience more than five million violent crimes and nearly 15 million property victimizations a year.

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) of the U.S. Department of Justice leads communities throughout the country in their annual observances of National Crime Victims' Rights Week by promoting victims' rights and honoring crime victims and those who advocate on their behalf. This year's theme— Expand the Circle: Reach All Victims—highlights how the investment of communities in crime victims expands the opportunity for victims to disclose their victimization, connect with services, and receive the support they need.

The U.S. Department of Justice will host OVC's annual National Crime Victims' Service Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C., to honor outstanding individuals and programs that serve victims of crime. For additional information about this year's National Crime Victims' Rights Week and how to assist victims in your community, feel free to contact the Lafourche Parish District Attorney's Office or the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office. For additional ideas on how to support victims of crime, visit OVC's website at www.ovc.gov.