

National Crime Victims' Rights Week is April 21-27, 2024, a time to recognize the rights of crime victims and survivors, along with professionals who provide important services to victims of crime.

Established in 1981, it was set with the goal to get people to confront and remove barriers to achieve justice for all victims of crime.

In 2012, a constituent, Melissa Bowers, was killed by her abusive boyfriend, leaving children and a grieving family to pick up the pieces.

This year, the week's theme is: ***How would you help? Options, services, and hope for crime survivors.***

It asks all of us how we can help crime victims and if we are prepared if someone confides in us? Are our local organizations victim-centered and trauma-informed? Are we all familiar with the services available in our communities?

It's calling us to create safe environments for crime victims to share what happened to them by offering support, options for life-saving services, and hope.

In Pennsylvania, 104 people died from domestic violence incidents last year, according to PA Coalition Against Domestic Violence. More than half were killed by a current or former intimate partner. They were shot, stabbed, beaten or strangled by someone they knew intimately. And while women (1 in 3) face domestic violence more readily, 1 in 4 men and nearly half of LGBTQ+ individuals will experience domestic violence in their lifetime.

With that in mind, we are asking people to stand with us and remember victims like Melissa Bowers by taking the Men's Challenge Pledge, which simply says: I pledge not to participate in, approve of, or remain silent about violence. I pledge to be an active bystander who will speak out about violence against women and girls. I will encourage all men to work together with Center for Victims and use our collective voices and resources to end all forms of violence.

Please join me in sponsoring this resolution and raising awareness about support for victims of crime.