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For Immediate Release

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## **NATIONAL CENTER FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME, RAINN AND LIFETIME TELEVISION CELEBRATE PASSAGE OF CRITICAL RAPE PREVENTION DNA BILL**

Considered the most important anti-rape legislation Congress has ever considered, the bill will help solve as many as 67,000 open rape cases

[Washington, DC] Today, the National Center for Victims of Crime, the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), and Lifetime Television released the following statement on the passage of the Advancing Justice Through DNA Technology Act and the Debbie Smith Bill.

“Just moments ago, the US House of Representatives passed the Justice for All Act of 2004 (H.R. 5107), which incorporates the Advancing Justice Through DNA Technology Act and the Debbie Smith Bill. Earlier today, the US Senate passed the identical bill. The bill now heads to the White House, where President Bush is expected to sign it within the next week.

“The bill provides funding to analyze the DNA evidence from 221,000 open rape and murder cases. We estimate that this funding will lead to solving as many as 67,000 of these cases, and will result in thousands of rapists being locked up. Because of this expected result, and the tens of thousands of future rapes that will likely be prevented by locking up ‘professional rapists,’ we consider this to be the most important anti-rape legislation Congress has ever considered.”

“This bill has been a top legislative priority for RAINN, the National Center for Victims of Crime and Lifetime Television for the past two years. We want to commend the President and Attorney General Ashcroft for their support of this important legislation, as well as the members of Congress who were our allies and partners in this effort. In particular, Senators Orrin Hatch, Patrick Leahy, Joseph Biden and Jon Kyl and Representatives James Sensenbrenner, William Delahunt, Carolyn Maloney, Mark Green and Jerry Nadler and their great staffs have been tireless in their efforts to pass this legislation and have worked closely with us to come to this satisfying conclusion. Our thanks also go to RAINN board member and founder of SOAR (Speaking Out About Rape), Kellie Greene, who more than 18-months ago joined Attorney General Ashcroft to

introduce the administration's DNA initiative and joined in our efforts to pass this important piece of legislation.”

“Most importantly, our thanks go to Debbie Smith, for whom the key part of the legislation is named, and her husband Rob. They have been the public face of this campaign, and its most effective advocates. They have been our close partners from the very beginning, and it was Debbie's last minute efforts pushed the bill forward and broke the final logjam preventing passage.’

“Thanks to this legislation, we estimate that 67,000 other victims just like Debbie and Kellie will be able to see their rapists face justice and will finally be able to rebuild their lives, as they have been able to do.”

### Background

A recent Department of Justice report found that DNA evidence from 540,000 crime scenes nationwide, including 221,000 open rape and murder cases, is sitting on shelves and in freezers, unanalyzed. All that prevents law enforcement from solving many of these crimes and locking up rapists and murderers are the results of DNA tests.

Specifically, the Justice for All Act of 2004, which incorporates the Advancing Justice Through DNA Technology Act and the Debbie Smith Bill:

- Creates the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program and authorizes \$755 million over five years for grants to states and local authorities to eliminate the backlog of untested rape evidence kits.
- Expands the Violence Against Women Act to provide legal assistance for victims of dating violence.
- Provides grants for training law enforcement, judges and medical personnel on the use of DNA analysis in sexual assault cases.
- Extends enhanced rights to crime victims at the federal level and provided funding to promote victim notification and compliance with victims' rights at the state level.

The National Center for Victims of Crime, RAINN and Lifetime have been working together for more than two years, along with rape survivors including Debbie Smith, to raise awareness about this issue and to urge Congress to eliminate the DNA backlog. More than 110,000 Lifetime Television viewers signed an online petition in support of this legislation.

### Information

The **Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network** is the nation's largest anti-sexual assault organization. RAINN operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1.800.656.HOPE. The hotline has helped more than 750,000 victims of sexual assault since 1994. RAINN also carries out extensive education and outreach programs to ensure that more than 100

million Americans each year receive vital information about sexual assault prevention, prosecution and recovery. After researching the nation's 819,000 charities, Worth Magazine selected RAINN as one of "America's 100 Best Charities." Additional information is at [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org).

The **National Center for Victims of Crime** is the nation's leading resource and advocacy organization for victims of crime. Since its founding in 1985, the National Center has worked with local, state, and federal organizations and agencies across the country, and provided information, support, and assistance to hundreds of thousands of victims, victim service providers, allied professionals, and advocates. The National Center's toll-free helpline, 1.800.FYI.CALL, offers supportive counseling, practical information about crime and victimization, referrals to local community resources, as well as skilled advocacy in the criminal justice and social service systems. Additional information is at [www.nevc.org](http://www.nevc.org).

**LIFETIME** is the leader in women's television and one of the top-rated basic cable television networks. A diverse, multi-media company, LIFETIME is committed to offering the highest quality entertainment and information programming, and advocating a wide range of issues affecting women and their families. Launched in 1984, LIFETIME Television serves over 88 million households nationwide. In 1998, LIFETIME launched Lifetime Movie Network, now in more than 43 million homes, and in 2001, Lifetime Real Women. LIFETIME Television, Lifetime Movie Network, Lifetime Real Women, Lifetime Radio for Women, Lifetime Home Entertainment and Lifetime Online are part of LIFETIME Entertainment Services, a 50/50 joint venture of The Hearst Corporation and The Walt Disney Company.