

**National Center for Victims of Crime
News Release
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National Center for Victims of Crime Applauds Legislation Criminalizing Video Voyeurism

Bill Takes Aim at Invasive Behavior; Serves as Model for States

Washington, DC – The National Center for Victims of Crime, the leading resource and advocacy organization for victims of crime, applauds today’s passage of the “Video Voyeurism Prevention Act of 2003” (S.1301) by the U.S. House of Representatives. This act makes it a federal crime to surreptitiously capture images of people in situations in which they have an expectation of privacy. The bill, championed by Representative Michael G. Oxley (R-OH) and Senators Michael DeWine (R-OH) and Charles E. Schumer (D-NY), will now return to the Senate for final approval before being sent to President Bush for his signature.

Ever-evolving technology – such as easier-to-obtain and harder-to-detect video surveillance equipment – offers video voyeurs new methods for targeting their unsuspecting victims in seemingly safe places like malls, parks and gyms. The increased use of the Internet by video voyeurs to display images captured surreptitiously further robs victims of their privacy and dignity.

“Providing federal protection to the victims of video voyeurism affirms the seriousness and growing threat of this invasive crime, as well as the horrifying effect that it has on its victims,” said Susan Herman, executive director of the National Center for Victims of Crime. “Congress is sending a powerful message that video voyeurism is criminal behavior and that its victims will be protected by the criminal justice system.”

In addition to serving as a model for states without such a law, the Video Voyeurism Prevention Act would give law enforcement the ability to punish offenders who commit this crime on federal land. To date, more than half of the states have criminalized video voyeurism.

“This legislation will provide strong new privacy protections for our citizens,” said Congressman Oxley. “There are too many people who have been embarrassed and hurt by this invasion of their privacy. We are finally bringing the law up to date with technology.”

“The Video Voyeurism Prevention Act of 2004 will help safeguard the privacy we all value as well as ensure that our criminal law reflects the realities of our rapidly changing technology,” said Senator DeWine. “The Act will prohibit both filming and taking compromising pictures of people in places where they expect privacy the most.”

The National Center for Victims of Crime has long advocated for video voyeurism legislation. The organization's toll-free Helpline has received an increasing number of calls from victims of video voyeurism who feel helpless and unprotected. "We applaud Representative Oxley and Senators DeWine and Schumer for their leadership on this issue," said Herman.

For more information on video voyeurism, please visit our Stalking Resource Center at www.ncvc.org/src.

The National Center for Victims of Crime is dedicated to forging a national commitment to help victims of crime rebuild their lives. 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.

Contact: Jen Baldassari
202-467-8700
jbaldassari@ncvc.org