

REMARKS
AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

OF

ALAN R. HANSON
ACTING ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

AT THE

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' SERVICE AWARDS CEREMONY

ON

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2017
WASHINGTON, DC

Thank you, Marilyn [Roberts]. It's an honor to be here, and a privilege to help recognize these outstanding individuals and teams for their exceptional service to crime victims. I would like to extend a special welcome to the members of Congress who have joined us today. We're very glad to have you with us.

Let me express to David Ferriero and the staff of the National Archives our appreciation for hosting today's ceremony. It's fitting that here, in the building that houses our nation's founding charter, we can honor those who fight every day for the cause of justice.

I also want to thank our very own Office for Victims of Crime, led by Marilyn Roberts. OVC and its partners have worked hard to make this event worthy of our award recipients. Thanks as well to our guest speaker, Mr. [Kevin] Mulcahy, who we all look forward to hearing from shortly.

I bring congratulations from Attorney General Sessions, who asked that I convey to our awardees – and to everyone in this auditorium – his deep appreciation and admiration for your service to our nation's crime victims. A long-scheduled commitment kept him from joining us in person today, but in spirit he stands beside you all. Having worked closely with Jeff Sessions as a member of his Senate staff, I know how very much he cares about the issues facing crime victims. In his many years on Capitol Hill, he was a steadfast champion of victims' rights, going so far as to support a victims' constitutional amendment. He carries that commitment into his role as our nation's chief law enforcement officer.

For our Attorney General, a former federal prosecutor, the safety of America's citizens is paramount – and he believes that no one deserves the promise of protection more than crime victims. His Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety is already at work exploring solutions to the crime problems in many of our towns and cities, the brunt of which is borne by victims and survivors.

Meanwhile, our Office for Victims of Crime is doing its part to give victims, and those who serve them, the support they need. Just last month, OVC awarded \$8.5 million to the Florida Office of the Attorney General to help provide services for victims and survivors of last year's mass shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando. The grant came out of OVC's Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program, which has been a critical source of aid and recovery for victims of mass violence – and it's a resource I am very glad we can offer to communities in the aftermath of tragedy.

But for all the work we're doing here in Washington, we know that it's not federal dollars that make the real difference. It's the service providers and their local allies who do the heavy lifting. It's the health professional who starts a crisis center in her own home. It's the lawyer and the police officer who fight for the rights of sexual assault victims. It's the organization that serves elder abuse victims and the program that helps young male victims of violence.

It's the team of prosecutors and investigators who bring long-awaited justice to victims' families, and it's the agency that supports victim assistance programs across an entire state. It's the young survivor of sexual assault who dedicates herself to protecting the rights of other survivors. And it's the families who have experienced tragedy and loss and who find a way to help others.

America is a better place because of each of you – individuals who, whether on your own or as part of a team, work to bind up wounds and give voice to those who have been silenced. You are the ones who change lives, and for that, this Department of Justice – and our nation – will always be grateful.

We honor your service, and congratulate you on a job well done.

###