



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

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Justice Department Honors D.C. Sexual Assault Survivor for Ensuring Victims Receive Results of Sexual Assault Kits

WASHINGTON—The Department of Justice will recognize Laurel Wemhoff with the Crime Victims Rights Award for her efforts to advance the rights of sexual assault victims, during the National Crime Victims' Rights Service Awards ceremony Tuesday, April 21, in Washington, D.C.

After being sexually assaulted in 2012, Wemhoff waited eight months for her Sexual Assault Nurse Exam kit to be processed, only to be told she did not have the right to know the results. Wemhoff partnered with the Network for Victim Recovery of D.C., testifying during a D.C. Council public hearing in December 2013 in favor of the Sexual Assault Victims' Rights Amendment Act (SAVRAA).

Her testimony led to the amendment of the SAVRAA legislation to include victims' rights not originally in the draft of the bill. The amended legislation passed May 6, 2014 gives survivors the right to timely notice that the assailant has been contacted by law enforcement.

At the April 21 ceremony the Justice Department will also recognize 11 other individuals and programs for their outstanding efforts on behalf of crime victims. Descriptions of the honorees are available at the Office for Victims of Crime's Gallery: <https://ovcnvrvw.ncjrs.gov/Awards/AwardGallery/gallerysearch.html>.

The Department's Office for Victims of Crime leads communities across the country in observing National Crime Victims' Rights Week and hosts an award ceremony each year. President Reagan proclaimed the first Victims' Rights Week in 1981, calling for greater sensitivity to the rights and needs of victims. This year's observance takes place April 19-25, with the theme *Engaging Communities. Empowering Victims*.

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About the Office of Justice Programs (OJP)

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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