



For Immediate Release
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ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN PROVIDING FORUM FOR CRIME VICTIMS

*National Crime Victims' Rights Week Kicks Off with First in
a Series of Roundtables*

Chicago – Attorney General Lisa Madigan’s office today hosted a crime victims’ roundtable in downtown Chicago to commemorate Crime Victims’ Rights Week, an annual week-long observance that began yesterday, April 13 and continues through Saturday, April 19. This year’s theme is “Justice for Victims. Justice for All.”

Crime victims and victims’ advocates came forward to tell personal stories of their experiences as victims of crime and the challenges they have faced. The roundtable panel of experts in the field included representatives from the Cook and DuPage Counties State’s Attorney’s offices, victim service agencies, law enforcement officials and Madigan’s Crime Victims Services Division.

“This roundtable gives us an opportunity to hear real-life stories of how people’s lives have been forever changed by their experiences,” Madigan said. “The information we glean from these roundtables will greatly assist my office and the larger victims’ services community in improving our advocacy efforts.”

In addition to victims’ testimony, keynote speaker, Douglas Beloof, executive director of the National Crime Victim Law Institute, addressed the status of victim rights in Illinois and nationwide and what lies ahead in the effort to enhance services. Beloof is a professor at Lewis & Clark Law School and supervises the Crime Victim Litigation Clinic. He authored the textbook, “Victims in Criminal Procedure,” which is recognized as the authoritative textbook on crime victim law.

Through the Crime Victims Services Division, Attorney General Madigan’s Crime Victims Compensation Bureau provides financial assistance to innocent victims of violent crimes and their families to cover out-of-pocket expenses including hospital, medical, funeral and other expenses related to the crime. Domestic violence victims also can receive financial assistance for relocation and moving expenses under a law Madigan drafted in 2005 that is supported through fees and fines imposed on convicted criminals.

Last week, Attorney General Madigan’s office hosted 37 crime victim advocates, criminal justice professionals and social service providers at the third Illinois Victim Assistance Academy (IVAA) on the campus of Illinois

State University. The IVAA is an intensive, 40-hour training designed to improve the quality and consistency of victim services across Illinois.

In 2007, the Attorney General's office, on behalf of victims, presented two special one-day trainings on stalking with more than 150 participants, including law enforcement officers, State's Attorneys prosecutors and investigators, court personnel, and domestic violence legal advocates. The trainings offered an overview of stalking laws, practical tips for investigations and helpful strategies for prosecution of stalking.

Attorney General Madigan's Crime Victims' Rights Roundtables are among 56 projects selected nationwide, and the only one in Illinois funded by the National Association of Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) through a grant from the Office of Victims of Crime (OVC) from more than 145 applications submitted. Another roundtable is scheduled for tomorrow, Tuesday, April 15, at the Attorney General's office in Springfield at 500 S. Second Street. The Attorney General's office will hold additional roundtables May 12, 2008, at John A. Logan College in Carterville and June 11, 2008, at Rock Island City Hall. The date for the Metro East roundtable has not been determined.

Interested individuals can learn more about the services provided by the Attorney General Madigan's Crime Victim Service Division at www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov, or by calling 1-800-228-3368.

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