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The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Graham, and members of the Committee:

The R Street Institute is happy to support the Violent Incident Clearance and Technological Investigative Methods Act or VICTIM Act as it is more commonly known. Our names are Jillian E. Snider, Policy Director of Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties at the R Street Institute, and Anthony Lamorena, Senior Manager of Federal Government Affairs at the R Street Institute, which is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, public policy research organization. Our mission is to engage in policy research and outreach to promote free markets and limited, effective government in many areas, including the criminal justice system. That is why we are in strong support of this legislation.

Research has consistently shown that the certainty of being caught for committing a crime is a much more effective deterrent of future crime than the severity of the punishment imposed. Case closure rates have dropped dramatically over the past 60 years. In 1964, homicide clearance rates were 83.7 percent, and in 1980, they were 71 percent. After a consistent decline, recent statistics indicate that currently only about half of all murders are being solved.

This has a direct impact on victim and witness cooperation and contributes to the fact that only half of all crimes are actually reported to police. Compounding this is that while crime rates have been leveling out since the 2020 surge, 77 percent of Americans are still fearful and see crime as a serious problem. As clearance rates decrease so does the deterring impact of swift and certain justice.

While contributing factors like trends in investigative workload and citizen cooperation must be considered, more immediate problems include reduced law enforcement investigatory personnel, inadequate training and technology, and inconsistencies in how law enforcement are able to provide adequate needs and resources to crime victims.

The VICTIM Act follows an evidence-based approach that aims to crack down on case clearance rates across the country in a variety of ways. The bill creates a grant program that can be utilized by law enforcement agencies to train and hire additional detectives and other police personnel to focus more time and resources on investigating and eventually solving homicides and non-fatal shootings in their jurisdiction. It will also allow these agencies to better invest in technologies that are

necessary to solving crime. The program also contains important components that aid victims by providing more training to police personnel to better address the different needs of victims and family members of homicides and other firearm-related crimes. Lastly, victims along with their family members will be able to receive mental health resources and additional assistance when it comes to shelters, wages, and relocation costs. In all, the VICTIM Act will give law enforcement the resources they need to unclog the backlog of cases for violent offenses and lower their case clearance rates.

Sincerely,

Jillian Snider
Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties Policy Director
R Street Institute

Anthony Lamorena
Senior Manager of Federal Government Affairs
R Street Institute