

NEWSRELEASE

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS GREG ABBOTT

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Attorney General Abbott Announces Confidential Address Program For Crime Victims

Victims of family violence, stalking and sexual assault can register for anonymous address

AUSTIN – Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott today announced that family violence, stalking and sexual assault victims may be eligible to participate in a new, state-sponsored address confidentiality program. Eligible Texans can register for an anonymous address that will appear on voter and school registration cards, driver's licenses, and most government documents, including court records.

The Attorney General's Crime Victim Services Division will designate a substitute address for eligible victims; receive service of process and mail for the participants; and forward mail to participants' actual address. During the 80th Legislative Session, Sen. Eddie Lucio authored legislation creating the Address Confidentiality Program (ACP), which authorizes the attorney general to provide this service to crime victims.

"Texas family violence, stalking and sexual assault victims can now obtain a confidential address that will help them protect their privacy and keep them secure," Attorney General Abbott said. "We are grateful to the victim assistance organizations that partnered with us to ensure this program provides the meaningful protections intended by the Legislature."

Applicants must meet with a local domestic violence shelter, sexual assault center, law enforcement, or prosecution staff member to discuss a safety plan and learn more about the enrollment process. To get contact information for local shelters, access the Texas Council on Family Violence Web site at www.tcfv.org or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799-SAFE. To contact local sexual assault centers, access the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault Web site at www.taasa.org or the National Sexual Assault Hotline at (800) 656- HOPE. Meeting with a victim advocate is vital to this process and required by law.

Sheryl Cates, chief executive officer of the TCFV and the National Domestic Violence Hotline praised the new program: "The ACP is yet another valuable tool available to victims of family violence in protecting themselves from the perpetrators who abuse them. We are grateful to General Abbott and his staff for seeking input from the Texas Council on Family Violence and many other domestic violence service providers in the development of ACP guidelines."

Annette Burrhus-Clay, executive director of TAASA, added: "Rape is a crime that removes control from a victim; this measure provides one additional avenue for restoring that control."

TAASA is proud to have worked with the Legislature, the Attorney General and other victim advocacy

organizations to see this important program through to fruition and we're hopeful that survivors of sexual violence, stalking and domestic violence will find this a helpful tool on their path to recovery.”

For more information about the Address Confidentiality Program or to learn more about the eligibility criteria, contact the program at (512) 936-1750 or (888) 832-2322, or visit the agency's Web site at www.texasattorneygeneral.gov.