

CLERK: LR 81, offered by Senators Pirsch and Pedersen, found on page 1659 of the Journal.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Senator Pirsch.

SENATOR PIRSCH: Thank you, Madam President and members of the body. This resolution commemorates Victim Rights Week, April 25th to May 1st. Justice Benjamin Cardosa's admonition, justice, though due to the accused, is due to the accuser also. The concept of fairness must not be strained until it is narrowed to a filament. We are to keep the balance true. Justice Cardosa's famous admonition written in the 1930s reaches today, calling us again to find the true balance in our justice system, a balance that will invest the same legitimacy to victim justice as we now accord criminal justice. This is the ideal that guides us as we participate in the 1993 National Victim Rights Week. Over the last 12 years in Nebraska, we have seen great progress in giving victims and survivors of crime a voice in our Legislature, a voice in our courtroom, and even the media. Victims, survivors and their advocates can be justly proud of the enactment of programs servicing victims of crime and the development of a new public consciousness of the effects of crime and effects on crime victims. But our work is far from done. Crime continues to take its daily devastating toll. New victims join the casualty list every day, and many who have survived in the past are revictimized by yet another trauma in the courtroom. The 1992 semiannual release of "Crime in Nebraska", distributed by Jean Lovell, Executive Director of the Nebraska Crime Commission, shows an increase in the violent crimes of murder, manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery and felony assault, increased by 259 crimes, which is an increase of 11 percent over 1991. More victims, more victims who will go on, hopefully, to report the crime, who will go on to see justice done in the courtroom. And these thousands of victims and survivors have made us aware of the upset of criminal attack, the impact of criminal attack, the financial losses, the physical injuries and the emotional harm. They have borne witness, as well, to some of the injustices inflicted on them in the aftermath of crime, injustices caused by the blame that society sometimes places on victims for having succumbed to crime, injustices resulting from an outdated criminal justice system that shows often indifference to the victims that need help, injustices caused by the way the impact of crime is ignored and minimized by people and institutions which mean no