

December 6, 2021

Chairman Jerrold Nadler
House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Jim Jordan
House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Re: Support the Homicide Victims' Families Rights Act

Dear Chairman Nadler and Ranking Member Jordan:

The undersigned organizations strongly support the bipartisan Homicide Victims' Families Rights Act (HVFRA). It is our understanding that this legislation, which is introduced by Representatives Eric Swalwell (CA-15) and Michael McCaul (TX-10), is being considered before your committee.

Violent homicides affect so many more lives than just the victim. The undersigned organizations all provide essential resources to families and loved ones of homicide cases by engaging in ongoing emotional support, education, prevention, advocacy, and awareness. We provide continued support to survivors during the devastation and helplessness they constantly feel while waiting for justice and closure for the murder of their loved ones.

HVFRA would expand rights to the families and loved ones in federal cases by requiring reviews and reinvestigations of cold case homicides. HVFRA would also provide relevant resources to law enforcement agencies by updating and categorizing the types of crimes that lead to homicide cold cases. With our collective goals towards supporting families and loved ones who seek justice for unsolved crimes, we collectively agree that HVFRA will provide important resources which will provide justice.

The HVFRA assists families and loved ones of homicide victims by:

- **Reinvigorating reviews of cold case murders files.** Reviews are initiated upon request by a loved one or family member three years after a case goes "cold." A case is "cold" if no suspect is readily identifiable and all leads have been exhausted.
- **Providing a full reinvestigation using the most up-to-date technologies and investigative standards.** Following a review request, if law enforcement concludes that new probative investigative leads would result, a full re-analysis must be undertaken. This includes a complete review of the file and accompanying evidence, new or renewed interviews with potential subjects and witnesses, and other methods to identify possible missed steps.
- **Increasing transparency in national crime databases.** The National Institute of Justice would annually publish detailed statistics on the number of cold cases, aggregated by the types of associated crimes and agency. This information will assist law enforcement agencies across state lines to help identify trends and hopefully find new leads.

- **Ensuring reviews and reinvestigations are working.** Federal law enforcement agencies would be required to provide annual reports to Congress on what is working and what is not working with new investigations. This will aide in ensuring that programs are biased towards assisting family members and loved ones find justice.

The undersigned organizations proudly support the HVFRA. This important legislation is completely aligned with our collective commitment towards assisting those who suffer following a cold case homicide. It is our hope that the House Judiciary Committee will promptly markup this legislation so that it can be received before the full House floor for swift passage.

Sincerely,

American Investigative Society of Cold Cases
Murder Accountability Project
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Organization for Victim Assistance
Parents of Murdered Children, Inc.
Project: Cold Case
Uncovered