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Where is Latisha's Law? Black Invisibility in the Social Construction of Victimhood

Teresa C. Kulig and Francis T. Cullen

Laws named after specific crime victims have become increasingly common. These laws are part of a broader effort to downgrade the status and rehabilitative needs of offenders and to hear the voices and trumpet the legitimate concerns of victims—often as a means of justifying punitive crime control policies. Beyond the substantive merit of individual statutes, collectively these named laws provide a clear image of which victims warrant protection and memorialization: Victims who are vulnerable in some way, who are pursued by predatory criminals into their otherwise safe domains, and—above all—who are White. In this regard, an analysis of 51 named laws from 1990 to 2016 reveals that the vast majority of them (86.3%) honor White victims. In asking the question, “Where is Latisha’s Law?,” we seek to illuminate the virtual invisibility of African American victims and the implicit social construction of which lives matter more in American society.

Keywords victimization; race and crime; named laws

The Patriot Act. The No Child Left Behind Act. The Unborn Victims of Violence Act. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. These are all names

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attached to laws passed in the United States. These labels are symbolic, communicating not only what the law seeks to accomplish but also core values—patriotism, children's healthy development, victims' well-being, and medical care to the sick—that would be difficult to oppose. But they are, as well, replete with coded messages, meant to appeal to a particular audience that holds a particular ideology. Put another way, names matter.

Our interest is in laws named after victims. Virtually all laws carrying victim names have been passed since 1990, a practice that shows no sign of abating (see Appendix 1). The timing of these laws reflects the rise of the victims' rights movement and, in particular, the placement of victims at the center of crime policy discourse. A key issue is who is represented in these laws and how these collective initiatives socially construct the nature of victimhood in the United States. As reported below, our analysis of "named laws" reveals a clear pattern: Nearly all laws are named after White victims displaying some vulnerability to violence (e.g., youth, gender, individual difference) that punctuated their otherwise safe and secure lives. The absence of statutes honoring African American or other minority victims is palpable. There are, as we will show, few laws carrying names such as "Latisha."

As discussed below, prior research has critiqued victim laws for having mainly symbolic, rather than substantive, effects. Our analysis seeks to build on these insights by calling attention to the racial symbolism of laws named for identifiable victims. Advocates are genuine in their hope that these statutes will sustain the memory of a loved one and ensure that others will be spared a tragic, if not heinous, fate. Taken together, however, these laws give only one "face" to the prototypical victim—White. In so doing, they are part of the broader social construction of crime that too often has depicted victims as White and offenders as Black. "The nature of this victim identity," observes Simon (2007, p. 76), "is deeply racialized. It is not all victims, but primarily white, suburban, middle-class victims, whose exposure has driven waves of crime legislation" (see also Tonry, 2011).

The Celebration of the Individual White Victim

The origins of the victim movement are typically traced to the 1960s and 1970s, buoyed by the intersection of liberal and conservative interests. On a more progressive side, victims' rights were trumpeted as a form of neglected civil rights. Special attention was paid by activists to recognize and assist females and children victimized by patriarchal violence often "behind closed doors." On a more right-wing side, victims' rights were portrayed as a form of rectifying the neglectful treatment harmed citizens received in the administration of justice. Innocent victims were to receive retribution and protection through law and order (Daigle, 2012; Fisher, Reyns, & Sloan, 2016; Wallace, 2007). An important accomplishment of this movement has been its success in passing an array of federal and state-by-state legislation. Fisher et al. (2016, p. 27), for example,

document 35 “key federal victims’ rights legislation” (e.g., Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, The Victims of Crime Act 1984, The Violence Against Women Act of 1994). Across the nation, jurisdictions have passed statutes implementing on behalf of victims compensation programs, the ability to give impact statements at sentencing hearings, rape-law reform, sex-offender notification and residential restrictions, bills of rights, and so on (Young & Stein, 2004). Notably, a long-standing theme in this literature is that many of these initiatives have symbolic effects (e.g., show concern for victims, appeal to get-tough sentiments) but have complicated if not generated counterproductive substantive effects (e.g., do little to help victims, do not reduce crime) (see Elias, 1983; Fisher, Hartman, Cullen, & Turner, 2002; Scheingold, Olson, & Pershing, 1992; Wright, 2015; more generally, see Gusfield, 1968).

It is within this context that laws named after specific victims have emerged. They are high in symbolic content but, again, the substantive effects of the policies they enact (e.g., lengthy mandatory sentences or sex-offender reporting requirements) are often of questionable value. A body of case studies on the more prominent of these laws—for example, Caylee’s Law, the Jeanne Clery Act, Megan’s Law, and The Adam Walsh Act—have emerged documenting their uncertain impact. Although some positive results are possible (see, e.g., Link, Epperson, Perron, Castille, & Yang, 2011; Marsh, 2011), most often the laws have had unanticipated, inconsistent, and/or problematic effects (see, e.g., Corrigan, 2006; Filler, 2001; Fisher et al., 2002; Freeman & Sandler, 2010; Friedman & Robinson, 2014; Levenson & Cotter, 2005; Logan, 2011; Petrosino & Petrosino, 1999; Spraitz, Frenzel, Bowen, Bowers, & Phaneuf, 2015; Welchans, 2005; Zgoba et al., 2015).

More relevant for our purposes, these scholarly analyses of the laws are not framed in terms of their racial content or are done so only in a limited way, with the whiteness of the victims occasionally mentioned (Socia & Brown, 2016; for an exception, see Filler, 2001). The coverage of named laws in contemporary textbooks is similarly devoid of discussions of the racial symbolism of the acts and, in particular, of the reluctance to memorialize Black victims through such statutes (Daigle, 2012; Doerner & Lab, 2012; Fisher et al., 2016; Karmen, 2013; Wallace, 2007). In large part, this neglect of race occurs because scholars are focusing on laws that have been passed (celebrating the memory of a White victim) and not on *laws that have not been passed* (celebrating the memory of still-nameless Black victims). Only when the perspective broadens from single laws to all laws named for victims does the racial content of this legislation become visible. Of course, taking this enlarged perspective is the purpose of the current analysis.

The Other and the Criminalblackman

Mass imprisonment has been at the centerpiece of American crime policy for four decades (Clear & Frost, 2014; Pratt, 2009). Diverse explanations for the

growth in the nation's inmate population have been advanced (for a summary, see Tonry, 2004). At least part of the causal nexus, however, was a changed "sensibility" or "ways of thinking" about crime (Tonry, 2004; p. 70). Recently, Simon (2014, pp. 17, 22) has captured one key element of this punitive sensibility by detailing the "common sense" about crime that justified the "extreme penology" of "total incapacitation." In this view, offenders were transformed into a single criminal class, all of whom were beyond reform and, regardless of their convicted crime, harbored violent propensities. Prison was the only safe option that could "prevent them from endangering innocent people" (2014, p. 23). In fact, total incapacitation for lengthy terms was essential, this common sense told us, because "any time a criminal leaves prison for any reason, the community becomes less safe" (p. 23).

This image of the offenders, captured most poignantly by Dilulio's (1995) construct of the cold-blooded, remorseless "super-predator," was a disquieting departure from how the wayward were viewed in the Progressives' model of individualized treatment (Rothman, 1980), also termed "penal welfarism" by Garland (2001). According to this correctional paradigm, offenders are flawed but not hopelessly so. By changing law-breakers into the law-abiding, rehabilitation allowed offenders to rejoin civil society, thus also enhancing public safety. But if not vanishing from sight, this portrayal was vigorously challenged. Writing in 2001, Garland captured this transformation. "The recurrent image of the offender," observed Garland (2001, p. 102), "ceased to be that of the needy delinquent or feckless misfit and became much more threatening—a matter of career criminals, crackheads, thugs, and predators." As a result, "penal policy discussions increasingly evoked cynicism about rehabilitative treatment, a distrust of penological experts, and a new righteousness about the importance and efficacy of punishment" (p. 102).

Offenders thus increasingly were depicted as "the other"—different from "us." "By engaging in violence or drug use, or recidivism," notes Garland (2001, p. 180), "they reveal themselves for what they are: 'the dangerous other', the under class. 'Our' security depends on 'their' control." But, of course, one other consideration, implicit in nearly all of these discussions about super-predators and the dangerous other, needs to be made explicit: These offenders were seen to have Black faces. Although some commentators noted that Whites also could be thugs (Dilulio, 1995), the identification of violent crime with blackness was virtually total. As Russell-Brown (2009) asserts, the association between race and crime is so strong as to produce the widely held stereotype of the "criminalblackman" (see also Young, 2006). The extant research supports this conclusion (for a review, see Unnever & Gabbidon, 2011). According to Tonry (2011, p. 80), "most white people assume the typical offender to be black." In particular, Whites are far more likely to believe that African Americans are more violent than Whites are themselves (Unnever & Cullen, 2012).

Part of this imagery reflected statistical realities: Although comprising about 13% of the nation's population, African Americans account for more than half

of arrests for robbery and murder/non-negligent homicide (Unnever & Gabbidon, 2011). Still, the competing reality is that due to the concentration of crime in people, families, and places (Weisburd, 2015), the vast majority of African Americans are not excessively involved in crime or the criminal justice system (see also Young, 2006). Further, the connection between race and crime was nourished by long-standing racism and, more duplicitously, by crass political opportunism. As part of the so-called Southern Strategy and starting with Barry Goldwater in the presidential elections of 1964, Republican politicians increasingly used racial imagery to attract the votes of Whites resentful toward minorities (Tonry, 2011).

This constant connection of race to crime is consequential. The "psychology of American race relations," observes Tonry (2011, p. 79), is "characterized by stereotypes of black criminals, unconscious preferences for whiteness over blackness, and lack of empathy among whites for black offenders and their families." Racial animus is a strong predictor of punitiveness (Unnever, Cullen, & Jonson, 2008), and "insensitivity to the interests of black people became a theme of crime and drug control policy" (Tonry, 2011, p. 80). Most relevant here, Tonry (2011, p. 80) asserts that the news and entertainment media "regularly portray criminals as black and victims as whites" and that "these stereotypes seep into people's thinking." We argue as well that they provide a context in which the naming of laws for Black victims simply does not come to mind.

The White Victim

In this era, the social construction of criminals as "the predatory other" led logically to competing imagery about victims. Notably, in most discussions, Black victims remained virtually invisible, either ignored or seen as consigned to everyday peril too commonplace to merit special attention. Some Black victims, it was assumed, evoked their own fate by participating in gangs, trafficking in drugs, and living by the code of the street (Anderson, 1999). Other Black victims had the misfortune of living in proximity to these super-predators, produced by the moral poverty of ghetto life (Bennett, Dilulio, & Walters, 1996). Much like those who perish because they live in a war zone, "innocent" African American victims were the unavoidable collateral damage of people residing in what some commentators described as the "killing fields" of urban America (see Sampson & Bean, 2006). Kids and grandmothers hit by stray bullets in drive-by-shootings, for example, made for sympathetic victims. But emotional attachment to them was transitory. They mainly were figures mentioned on the evening news whose names and fate quickly faded from memory as the show and viewers' attention moved on to the nightly weather and sports reports. Ironically, these news reports were typically reassuring. Upon learning that the location of African Americans' victimization was in "Black areas,"

viewers could take comfort that they were at a safe social distance from these dangerous neighborhoods where, for the most part, violence was contained by the state (Wacquant, 2009).

By contrast, it was White victims, especially those in middle-class communities, that should be safe from crime, whose visibility was accentuated. "The crime victim," as Simon (2007, p. 108) notes, became "its own idealized political subject" in the 1980s. A key feature of the social construction of the White victim was to highlight the identity of the *specific individual victim* (Garland, 2001). Under the Progressive or penal-welfare model, it was offenders who were to be studied, diagnosed, and treated according to their individual criminogenic needs. But the emergence of a new common sense (Simon, 2014) aggregated all criminals into a single category whose reform could never be completely certified and whose predatory propensity constituted an ongoing risk to be feared and to be tightly contained—preferably in prison but, if necessary, in the ghetto (Wacquant, 2001, 2009). Victims were once part of the public represented by the state, but now they were highlighted as innocent individuals whose names and stories deserved to be known. As the victim category was "dis-aggregated," concluded Garland (2001, pp. 12–13), "it was no longer sufficient to subsume the individual victim's experience in the notion of the public good: the public must be individuated, broken down into individual component parts." It was the individual (White) victim who merited celebration, not the offender.

In fact, the relationship between victim and offender became redefined in oppositional terms. In the past, expressions of humanity toward offenders and the advocacy of effective treatment programs were seen to benefit the public good by reducing the likelihood of recidivism (Rothman, 1980). But this utilitarian calculus omitted a key consideration: Any attention given to the predator was a slap in the face to their victims. As Garland (2001, p. 180) observes,

the interests of victim and offender are assumed to be diametrically opposed; the rights of one competing with those of the other in the form of a zero sum game. Expressions of concern for the offender and his needs signal a disregard for the victim and her suffering.

In turn, this view justified punitive policies, both to exact retribution and to ensure that heinous victimizations would never happen again. The personalization of victimhood, as Gottschalk (2006, p. 226) notes, "helped to solidify a view of capital punishment and punishment more broadly as primarily a contest between victims and offenders." In this context, many elected officials took the side of the innocents—the victims—and passed legislation that would remove the predatory from community streets for many years to come. The efficacy of these get-tough statutes is questionable, but, in a way, political capital is captured not based on distant substantive outcomes but on the immediate appeal of symbolic messages (Garland, 2001).

The individual crime victim—their voice or their memory—now has accumulated an unchallenged legitimacy. “The new political imperative,” Garland (2001, p. 143) reminds us, “is that victims must be protected; their voices must be heard, their memory honored, their anger expressed, their fears addressed.” Laws passed in their honor, especially those bearing their name, constitute an important means through which victimhood is understood. As Simon (2007, pp. 109–110) concludes:

By writing laws that implicitly and increasingly explicitly say that we are victims and potential victims, lawmakers have defined the crime victim as an idealized political subject, the model subject, whose circumstances and experiences have come to stand for the general good.

As Simon (2007) well understands, this idealization of victims clearly applies only to White Americans, especially those in the middle class (see also Filler, 2001). In this public discourse, “we” does not include “the loved ones of imprisoned family members.” Nor (as the Black Lives Matters movement would point out) does it include comments like “we live in fear that we or those we care for will be arrested or locked up.” The lived reality for African Americans, especially those in inner-city neighborhoods, is more complex. The circulation of so many young Black men between prison and the community, often individuals they know, makes it difficult to place victims and offenders in a zero-sum contest (Clear, 2007). They share the common fate of being born into and then residing in the same impoverished community. Their contest is less with one another than with the larger social forces and state welfare policies that make them part of the “truly disadvantaged” (Wilson, 1987; see also Wacquant, 2009).

In a commentary on Dilulio’s (1994) essay suggesting, among other things, that incarceration saves Black lives, the conservative African American scholar Glenn Loury captured the reluctance of inner-city residents to forsake the offenders among them. Counseling Dilulio and others to “listen to the black community,” Loury cautioned that “law-abiding black Americans are deeply ambivalent about these issues” (1994, p. 35). The upstanding citizens in these areas recognize that the “young black men wreaking havoc in the ghetto are still ‘our youngsters.’” This unavoidable reality inspires a “sense of sympathy for and empathy with the perpetrators” and makes the residents unwilling to “write off many of the perpetrators (some at a quite early age) as beyond redemption” (p. 35). For them, the solution is not increased social distance, represented most fully by total incarceration, but a closer involvement in the lives of at-risk offenders. As Loury (1994, pp. 36–37) observed, “religious and civic volunteers” in these communities who work with troubled residents and are “a positive forces for change.” It is the “mobilization of forces of this kind,” he concluded, that offers the best hope to “reverse the situation in these decimated communities” (p. 37).

Implications

This conceptual framework argues that race occupies a central place in American crime policy, including in the social construction of victimhood. Because each individual law has its own unique history, studying statutes one at a time—which is commonly done—can mask the impact of race. But when laws named for victims are viewed collectively, they provide clear evidence of which victims are celebrated and which remain invisible. Our conceptual framework led us to predict that laws would be more likely to memorialize White victims. What was unanticipated, however, was the extent to which this social practice—naming laws for victims—would be disproportionate in its failure to include African Americans. Further, these laws likely not only reflect but also contribute to the existing social reality. Each new law reinforces the image of victims as innocent, vulnerable Whites who might have been spared their tragic fate if only the state had exercised stricter controls over the predators that roamed into their community.

Research Strategy: Purpose and Methods

This study was undertaken because of our sense that few laws celebrating crime victims were named after African Americans. At the inception of the investigation, however, we knew the names only of a select number of statutes (e.g., Megan's Law) and could not estimate how many of these laws had been passed. We cannot confirm that our search has been exhaustive or that more subsections of laws do not contain victims' names, but we are confident that few, if any, named laws have escaped detection. Conducted between March 2015 and June 2016, the search included not only Google but also major newspaper data sources. Search terms included "apostrophe laws," "laws named after dead victims," "named laws," and a search of "victim laws" followed by each state. Additional searches were done using a Congressional record database for federal laws that have been passed. Any mention of a possible law was explored. In general, only passed state and federal legislation was included in the current study. There were two exceptions to this condition where two pending criminal laws were added due to the criminal nature of the offenses (The Amy and Vicky Child Pornography Victim Restitution Improvement Act of 2015 and Justin's Law). Once laws were identified, state and federal legislation documents, criminal records, court documents, newspaper stories, and images that were available were reviewed in attempts to obtain accurate information regarding the law, victim(s), and perpetrator(s). Additionally, laws that were passed in multiple states (e.g., Caylee's Law) were only counted once. If there were multiple states with similar laws, efforts were made to find the initial passing of the law. In the end, we uncovered 51 laws or acts named after crime victims.

In most instances, the criminal nature of the victimization was clear cut (e.g., a child abducted and murdered). In a few instances, the decision to include the law was more ambiguous. For example, Matt's Safe School Law was named after Matt Epling who committed suicide after being assaulted by bullies at school. Bullying might or might not be criminal, depending on whether it was psychological or physical. Because bullying carries the potential for illegal conduct, we included this law in the study. Given that the nature of the laws are described in some detail in Appendix 1, the wisdom of our judgment can be evaluated. Regardless, the core findings of this research are unaffected by the few more ambiguous laws we have listed. Some descriptions of the laws listed in Appendix 1 are taken from sources that are available from the authors.

Some named laws, however, were not included in the analysis because they clearly fell outside the criterion to focus on crime-related laws. These laws were similar to the laws in our study because they carried the name of victims who suffered harm that family and other advocates wished to prevent in the future. For example, Jacob's Law was named after Jacob Strebler, a 6-year-old who was killed in a collision involving a truck and school van that did not meet safety standards. The case led to civil suits but not to criminal prosecution. The law prohibits school transportation vans that do not meet federal school bus safety standards.

When a named law was identified, we collected all available information on the underlying victimization. Conducting a full-blown case study of 51 laws was not feasible. Still, we were able to access a number of news reports and to develop a fairly detailed portrait of most of the victimizations and of the corresponding laws that were subsequently passed. Given the purpose of our project, the main focus was to code the race/ethnicity of the victim. In nearly all cases, it was possible to code race/ethnicity based on photos of the victim that were available. The only exception was the Amy and Vicky Child Pornography Victim Restitution Improvement Act of 2015. In naming the Amy and Vicky law, pseudonyms were used to keep the actual victims' identities private. Confirmation from Senator Portman's (R-OH) office indicated that Amy was White and Vicky was likely White (personal communication, July 13, 2015).

Note that although there are 51 named laws, these cover 61 victims because seven statutes honor two or more victims each. One of these is the law sponsored by Senator Portman, which honors "Amy" and "Vicky." As its name indicates, two victims are memorialized by the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. Laci and Conner's Law remembers Laci Peterson and her unborn son, Conner, when they were both murdered while she was eight months pregnant. The Hillory J. Farias and Samantha Reid Date-Rape Drug Prohibition Act of 2000 honors two teenage females who died after being drugged by GHB or suspected to have been drugged. Five victims are named after the Scott Campbell, Stephanie Roper, Wendy Preston, Louarna Gillis, and Nila Lynn Crime Victims' Rights Act. The Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu

National Alert Act is named after two police officers who were shot and killed while parked in their patrol car. Finally, Ethen’s Law honors Jenna Nielson who was murdered eight-and-one-half months pregnant with her unborn son, Ethen.

Four other characteristics of each case were collected and coded. First, we noted the date when the law was passed. The dates ranged from 1990 to 2016. Because it is now more than six decades old, we excluded the 1932 Lindbergh Law (Federal Kidnapping Act), the famous case in which Charles Jr., a 20-month-old White male, was kidnapped and murdered. Second, information on the nature of the victimization was recorded. Third, the age, gender, and race/ethnicity of the victim were documented. Fourth, we recorded what the law was intended to accomplish. This information is contained in Appendix 1. (A more elaborate version of Appendix 1 is available upon request from the lead author.) The laws are listed chronologically, from oldest to most recent in their passage. Table 1 presents summary statistics on characteristics marking the laws.

Table 1 Characteristics of laws named for crime victims (*N* = 51 laws; *N* = 61 victims)

<i>Race/ethnicity of victims by law</i>			
White	44		
African American	2		
Hispanic	1		
One White and one African American	1		
One White and one Hispanic	1		
Four White and one African American	1		
One Hispanic and one Asian	1		
<i>Year law passed</i>			
1990–1994	4		
1995–1999	3		
2000–2004	9		
2005–2009	15		
2010–2014	15		
2015–2016	5		
<i>Gender of victims by name of law</i>			
Male	16		
Female	33		
Both male and female	2		
<i>Age and gender of victims</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Children (12 and under)	17	6	11
Early teens (13–15)	5	4	1
Later teens (16–19)	11	1	10
Young adults (20–25)	12	2	10
Adults (over 25)	16	7	9

Findings

Looking for Latisha's Law

As anticipated, laws honoring crime victims personally are predominantly named after White victims (see Table 1). Of the 51 laws listed in Appendix 1, only 4 are named after African American victims. The Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Act of 2007 memorialized Till who, while visiting Money, Mississippi from Chicago in 1955 at the age of 14, was murdered for allegedly whistling at a 21-year-old White, female store owner. To gain justice for her son, Mamie Till Mobley left his casket open so the brutality of the murder would be apparent. It took until 2004, however, for the federal government to reopen Till's case and explore whether additional perpetrators were involved in the murder. A movement to reexamine other unsolved murders led to the Till Act. The legislation was initiated by Representative John Lewis (D-GA), an eminent civil rights figure, and supported by more than 50 co-sponsors.

Another African American victim to be honored with a law was James Byrd, Jr., a 49-year-old man tied by three White men to the back of a pickup truck and dragged to his death. He was included with Matthew Shepard in a federal hate crime legislation. Thus, two of the laws named for Black victims were, in effect, federal civil rights laws. Although Byrd and Shepard were murdered in 1998, the Shepard-Byrd Hate Crime Act did not pass until 2009. Notably, the late Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) was instrumental in the law's passage.

A third Black victim was part of another federal statute. After victims' rights groups relinquished hope of passing a constitutional amendment, they successfully lobbied the U.S. Congress in 2004 to pass the Scott Campbell, Stephanie Roper, Wendy Preston, Louarna Gillis, and Nila Lynn Crime Victims' Rights Act (Kyl, Twist, & Higgins, 2005). Louarna Gillis was a 22-year-old African American female and the daughter of a Los Angeles police officer, John Gillis. In 1979, she was murdered by an acquaintance from high school because the quickest way to rise in the ranks of the "Mexican Mafia" was to kill a police officer or member of the officer's family (Gillis, 2012). As Kyl et al. (2005, p. 582) note, the "family was not notified of critical proceedings in the killer's trial, including arraignment." The family also was barred from being in the courtroom during the perpetrator's trial (Gillis, 2012). At the time the law was passed 25 years later—which included a provision to notify victims of and to be present at court proceedings—John Gillis was the Director of the Office for Victims of Crime of the U.S. Department of Justice in the George W. Bush Administration (Gillis, 2012; Kyl et al., 2005). Although no definitive information is available, it seems likely that his involvement in victims' rights influenced the inclusion of his daughter among the five victims named by the Crime Victims' Rights Act.

Thus, African American victims were honored in laws at the federal level that expanded civil rights protections or to establish crime victims' rights (see

also Simon, 2007). Two of these laws also involved White victims and honored victims that died many years before (25 and 53 years prior to the law being enacted). The only exception to these trends was a fourth Black victim—Vasean Alleyne—who was killed crossing the street by an intoxicated driver when he was 11-years-old. He is honored in the New York legislation, Vasean's Law, that was passed a little over 6 months following his death. This act increased penalties for drivers who, while driving under the influence, kill or seriously injure someone. This law was only passed in New York and was not copied elsewhere. The exceptional nature of this statute is demonstrated further by this fact: Of the 31 named laws passed by state legislatures, only this one memorialized an African American victim (3.2%).

Given their number and unique histories, laws named for White victims manifest some diversity. Still, the legislative history of such laws often includes strong advocacy by the victim's parents and receptive support from elected officials at the state level. For example, the murder of their 7-year-old daughter by a two-time convicted sex offender prompted Maureen and Richard Kanka to urge the New Jersey legislature to mandate that the public be notified when a convicted sex offender moved into their area. Megan's Law (New Jersey) was passed 89 days after their daughter's disappearance (Daly, 2004). The Kankas also started the Megan Nicole Kanka Foundation to help them sustain their mission of revising legislation, searching for lost children, and providing funds for background checks on individuals who work with children. Similarly, after Jessica Lunsford's murder in February 2005, her father, Mark Lunsford, actively pursued legislation that would increase the monitoring of sex offenders. When Jessica's Law was initially filed in April 2005, there were more than 20 legislators co-sponsoring the bill. The Jessica Lunsford Act was quickly passed and signed by Florida Governor Jeb Bush in May 2005—just three months after Jessica's disappearance.

Other laws responding to different types of crimes tend to follow a similar pattern. For example, when 16-year-old Amelia Keown was killed in a vehicle crash with an intoxicated paroled offender in August 2012, her family fought for tougher legislation to prevent future crimes. Amelia's mother, Amanda Moore, and her grandfather, Wayne Keown, launched an initiative to strengthen the tracking of parolees through transdermal monitoring devices (Farrell, 2013). Both representatives and senators sponsored the law, which was signed by Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam in March 2014. Two similar laws passed in separate states: 5-year-old Kevin Miller (Pennsylvania, Kevin's Law) and 15-year-old Brandon Pethtel (Ohio, Brandon's Law) were both killed in vehicle accidents where drivers fled the scene of the crime. With the help of state legislators, the families of each victim pursued tougher legislation to increase penalties for hit-and-run drivers.

It should be noted that three other statutes were named after minority victims. Leandra's Law was named for an 11-year-old Hispanic female, Leandra Rosado, who was killed while riding in a car driven by a friend's mother who was intoxicated. Hillory Farias was a 17-year-old Hispanic female who died

after a suspected overdose of the drug GHB slipped into her drink at a teen dance club. She is included in the federal legislation, the Hillory J. Farias and Samantha Reid Date-Rape Drug Prohibition Act of 2000. Lastly, Rafael Ramos (40-year-old Hispanic male) and Wenjian Liu (32-year-old Asian male) were police officers killed in the line of duty and the inspiration for the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015.

In sum, legislation in the United States disproportionately memorializes individual White victims. This occurs despite the fact that compared to Whites, African Americans experience higher rates of nonfatal violent crimes and account for half of all homicide victims (Harrell, 2007; Truman & Langton, 2015). Thus, of the 51 laws, 44 or 86.3% were named after only White victims. When laws involving White victims in combination with victims who are Black or Hispanic are also included ($n = 47$)—that is, the Shepard-Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act, the Crime Victims' Rights Act, and the Farias-Reid Date-Rape Prohibition Act—the percentage of named laws involving Whites climbs to 92.2%. Of the 61 victims honored by named laws, 53 or 86.9% were named after White victims. Further, with the exception of the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015, the last 19 laws, covering 21 victims, have all been named for White victims.

One final consideration merits attention. In the current study, we count as laws only the first law passed for a given victim. Some of these statutes, however, have subsequently been adopted by other states—sometimes including the victim's name, sometimes not. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to determine the spread of all statutes, information is available on several notable named laws. For example, the following laws have been enacted in other states: Caylee's Law (10 states), Erin's Law (27 states), Jessica's Law (43 states), and Marsy's Law (31 states). As can be seen, there are now well over 100 named victim's state-level laws in the United States. Only one state law—less than 1% of all statutes—honors a Black victim.

Growing Attention to Individual Victims

As Garland (2001) notes, a key feature of the attention given to victims in crime policy was to focus on them not as a group category ("the public") but as individuals. The trend began in 1990 with the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act, which was later renamed the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act. This act continues to have an influence on campus crime policy (see, e.g., Fisher et al., 2002, 2013).

At the same time (August 18, 1990), another law was passed in honor of a non-crime victim, Ryan White. He was initially expelled from school after contracting HIV during a blood transfusion, dying from complications at age 18. His plight received sustained national attention and was credited with reducing bias against AIDS patients. His funeral, at which close family friend Elton John performed "Skyline Pigeon," was attended by a roster of celebrities, ranging

from Barbara Bush to Michael Jackson (Johnson, 1990). Notably, his courage and voice was honored with the passage of The Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act of 1990, which provided financial assistance to improve the quality and availability of care for individuals and families with HIV disease (O'Brien, 1991). Although the connection to later crime-victim laws cannot be established definitively, it is likely that this prominent effort to memorialize Ryan White served as a powerful example of what could be accomplished by naming legislation after an innocent individual victim.

As Table 1 reveals, named laws for crime victims appeared throughout the 1990s but at a slow rate. This practice has increased steadily since 2000. Nine laws were passed in 2000–2004, 15 from 2005 to 2009, and 20 from 2010 to 2016. It is difficult to know if named laws will continue to be passed, given that each one requires a special case and advocates to trumpet the statute. Still, the data presented here indicate that named laws will continue to be implemented with regularity in the time ahead.

Focus on Vulnerable Victims

Perhaps the defining feature of the laws is that they are named after individuals who were vulnerable to their victimization. Virtually every case involved some sort of harm—sexual abuse, kidnapping, and/or death—that the victims did not have the capacity to prevent. As will be discussed shortly, a law was needed to ensure that no other defenseless individuals would experience the same victimization again.

Not surprisingly, 33 of the 51 laws, 64.7%, were named after only female victims (see Table 1). Of the 61 victims memorialized by the laws, 41 or 67.2% were females. Apart from vehicle crashes due to intoxication (e.g., Leandra's Law) and crimes where the perpetrator has not been apprehended (e.g., Hillory Farias case, Caylee Anthony case, Kristen's Act), every female victim suffered harm at the hands of a male perpetrator. Children were especially vulnerable due to their age and gender, unable to repel sexual abuse, abduction, and/or lethal attacks. If older, they were murdered or otherwise harmed by perpetrators who had a strong propensity to harm them—ex-boyfriends or husbands in domestic violence attacks, ex-felons intent on victimizing again, or the mentally ill driven by their demons. They often were attacked in, lured to, or taken against their will to places where no guardianship was present—a college dormitory room, a private home, or, in the case of a realtor, an unoccupied house up for sale.

Male victims similarly displayed a special vulnerability that made fending off their victimization impossible. They were still unborn, abducted as children, suffering from a disability, hazed or bullied by schoolmates, hit by vehicles that they could not avoid, shot by a stray bullet in a presidential assassination attempt, shot while sitting in their parked police vehicle, stabbed by a prison

inmate while on duty, or overpowered by two or more other males in a brutal attack.

Once again, race was implicit in who was being recognized as vulnerable and which victims in the future were in need of special protection. The only African Americans enshrined in the named laws were those suffering a civil or victim's rights violation or for Vasean who was killed by an intoxicated driver. It is as though these victims were seen as meriting protection by the federal government or, in the limited example, of being protected by the state of New York. Although there was no apparent opposition to laws being named for Black victims (as there was for example, in some states to the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday), race seems to have mattered more as a criterion of omission or neglect. Other African American victims' plight—including thousands of who experienced violent street crime in recent decades—seems not to have risen to the level where it warranted collective concern by the citizenry or, in the least, by politicians and the media (see also Wanzo, 2009). By contrast, the suffering experienced by a range of White victims was an occasion to take stock of what had happened, to memorialize the tragic loss, and to ensure that it never happened again.

Never Letting It Happen Again

From news reports, we attempted to record who was most active in campaigning for the named law's passage. Again, without a full case history, we cannot say definitively that we have captured fully the details of how the proposed statutes became law. Still, our analysis of news reports and legislation documents reveals an expected pattern of results. Three-fourths of the named laws (74.5%) resulted from the efforts of parents and family members of the victim (joined by the victim if still living). Further, when their role was reported as being prominent, we also recorded the identities of politicians that played a key role in the law's passage. This occurred in a little over one half of the laws.

Regardless, it appears that parents and family members not only did not want the victims to be forgotten but also did not want their loss to have been in vain. Thus, the laws not only memorialized the victims by carrying their name but also were designed to implement reforms that would prevent the victimization in question from ever happening again. This is readily apparent in Appendix 1 in the last column that describes "What the Law Does." For example, Adam Walsh was a 6-year-old who was abducted from a shopping mall and decapitated. The "safety act" passed in his honor required the creation of a national sex offender registry, increased penalties for sexual offenses against children, and promoted Internet safety (Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006). Similarly, the law named after Jim Brady, shot in John Hinckley's assassination attempt on President Reagan, required a background check on those purchasing a gun from a licensed dealer (Brady Handgun

Violence Prevention Act). And to cite one more example: The law for Kelley Rutledge Johnston, beaten and murdered by her estranged husband, made it a capital offense to murder someone when a protective order was in place (Kelley's Law).

Finally, the laws tended to increase the capacity to exercise control over potential perpetrators so as to minimize future victimization. A common policy reform was to increase the detection, prosecution, punishment, and monitoring of offenders at risk of victimizing those enshrined in the named laws. A related reform was to provide the public with greater information about the risks they might face (e.g., the Clery Act about campus crime) and about where dangerous offenders might reside (e.g., sex offender registry).

Discussion: Race and the Social Construction of Victimhood

We selected the name Latisha—meaning happiness or joy—in part because of its alliteration with “law” but more so because it is identified as an African American girl name. It reached its popularity in 1980 but remains a name in some use today (Behind The Name, 2015). We assumed that a law named after Latisha would evoke, in most observers, the assumption that the victim was Black. Thus, in asking, “Where is Latisha’s Law?”, we were suggesting that few, if any acts would have been passed in honor of Black victims. The data bear out this anticipated outcome.

There are few laws named after Latisha. When this fact is unmasked, it becomes for most of us “obviously true.” “Of course” named laws are initiated to honor Whites (and most often White females). This empirical reality is taken for granted and, some might argue, is a symptom of White privilege. White lives matter and, when the loss is profound and unusual, it is to be anticipated that the political order will create a mechanism to memorialize this tragedy and to show that this should never happen again. It is only when the invisibility of African American victims is pointed out and made visible that the absence of laws in their honor becomes strikingly apparent. Blacks’ suffering at the hands of crime is neither desired nor approved; it is just not of such importance as to inspire more than momentary recognition.

Being a crime victim for African Americans is assumed to be an unfortunate cost of being Black that Whites “can do nothing about.” “We” can send in the police to stop and frisk inner-city minority males or, in our better moments, “to do community policing,” and we can send Black drug traffickers, gang members, and predators to prison in record numbers. But the victimization of African Americans is either assumed to be victim precipitated (from Blacks being involved in a criminal lifestyle) or due to the risk that “decent” Blacks incur for living next to “street” Blacks who are criminal (see Anderson, 1999). By contrast, suffering a horrible, lethal criminal victimization is not supposed to be part of White America and certainly not something that White women and helpless children living in upstanding (White) communities should ever face.

When such loss does occur, it is in the moment newsworthy and covered by the media as a lead story. In the long run, the loss becomes a potential candidate for a named law.

One exception, at least to a limited degree, are civil rights cases—such as those involving Emmett Till and James Byrd, Jr. According to Simon (2007), in this context crime serves as a conduit for illuminating the importance of a larger civil rights agenda. Commenting on both racial justice and feminist advocates, he notes that “both the black victim of racist violence and the female victims of rape and assault tied the personal witness of crime victims to the historical and sociological narrative of racial and gender domination” (2007, p. 108). These gruesome victimizations—Emmett Till killed for whistling at a White, female store owner and James Byrd, Jr. dragged to death behind a pickup truck—impact the conscience of White America. Laws memorializing these victims of racial hate constitute a collective statement that “we” are not like “those” White perpetrators. However appropriate and valuable such laws are, they ignore the crime victimization experienced by African Americans on an everyday basis in inner-city communities. In most instances, little White empathy and sense of responsibility for these human tragedies are manifested. Lacking a historical perspective, no connection is made between civil rights and related social justice concerns and contemporary Black victimization. The two other laws named for African Americans have an idiosyncratic quality to them and, given their small number, do not point to any clear pattern of special concern for Black lives.

This White privilege explanation for the invisibility of Black victimhood is not a conspiracy theory. Rather, it is more of a structural or systemic explanation. This perspective alerts us that the socio-political system, including taken-for-granted cultural beliefs and practices, are arranged to reflect racial inequality. White experience is taken to be normative (Kendall, 2002; Wildman, 2005). In this case, freedom from criminal victimization is seen as a privilege or right that White Americans should expect. When this does not occur, then the system must respond in a way that demonstrates, at least symbolically, that this breakdown in the normative order is the exception and not the rule. Thus, when a prominent White person is murdered, inordinate police resources are allocated to solving the case (Manning, 2002). African Americans at times point out that this concentration of law-enforcement resources is not allocated when an innocent Black inner-city mother or child is gunned down—or perhaps goes missing (Burnett, 2014; see also Min & Feaster, 2010). “Everyone” knows that this is true, which is why the response from officials is typically, and smartly, silence rather than an indefensible denial.

Importantly, this White privilege explanation is not based on racial threat. Efforts were made to obtain the race of all known perpetrators for each of the victims in the current study to determine whether White victims were more likely to be attacked by Black or minority offenders. Online newspapers, court documents, and law publications were reviewed for any images or indications of a perpetrator’s race. When applicable, trial courts or police departments

were contacted in an attempt to identify a defendant's race. Still, there were seven cases with White victims where the perpetrator was not caught ($n = 2$) or the race of the perpetrator was unknown ($n = 5$). We then analyzed the perpetrators who had some race indicator (i.e., demographic information, an image). Notably, in the cases involving White victims named in laws ($n = 46$), approximately 8 in 10 offenders were also White or likely White (38 of 46 or 82.6%). (Further details on the perpetrator data are available upon request.)

Thus, the bias reflected in named laws was not based on racial threat but instead lies in the unstated assumption that White lives are *inherently* valuable—that they have futures that will be rewarding and beneficial to society. This bias exists within the broader structural context of continued racial inequality where the Black-White gap in household income has widened (to \$27,000 adjusted for inflation) (Woodruff, 2013) and where household wealth for Whites is 13 times higher (Kochhar & Fry, 2014). When a White life is lost—whether a presidential advisor who no longer will be in the White House or a child who will not go to college, get married, and have a family and successful career of her own—what is being lost is palpable. But when a Black life is lost in a neighborhood marked by violence and concentrated disadvantage, the future that will be missed fails to resonate on a large scale. The shooting deaths of star athletes—such as basketball player Ben Wilson in Chicago in 1984—proves the rule (Johnson, 2014). Such murders are widely regretted because the future of these Black victims—rising out of the ghetto to earn college scholarships and millions of dollars as a professional player—can be visualized.

Although establishing that the laws are almost exclusively named after White victims, the ultimate value of this achievement seems uncertain. These laws do not necessarily comprise a social good that gives an advantage to Whites not enjoyed by African Americans. As noted, the statutes serve mostly as measures that are more symbolic than substantive. They are thus a way to socially construct which victims matter and, implicitly, which do not. For example, the main provision of the act honoring Jeanne Clery, a 19-year-old raped and murdered in her campus residence hall, was to have universities collect and publish official crime statistics and distribute an annual security report (Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act). Although raising awareness of the issue of campus crime, it is unclear whether the law and colleges' inconsistent compliance with it has markedly made students safer (Fisher et al., 2002). Writing in 2001, Garland put the matter more bluntly, cautioning that these laws are characterized by "an element of exploitation...as the individual's name is used to fend off objections to measures that are often nothing more than retaliatory legislation passed for public display and political advantage" (p. 143). More recently, Socia and Brown (2016) echoed these sentiments with regard to Caylee's Law, the statutes passed by a number of states in response to the Casey Anthony trial that criminalize the failure to report a missing child. These laws, observe

Socia and Brown (2016, p. 348), exemplify that “the tendency to mobilize political action about ‘triggering events’ through claims-making, to justify new penal legislation on the basis of worst case scenarios and public fears, and to demonize the accused in ways that reaffirm social solidarity in the face of heinous crimes.”

Two other considerations, however, are operative. Just as collective efficacy or the ability of communities to achieve valued goals is unequally distributed (Sampson, 2012), political efficacy also is likely more prevalent among the families of White, middle-class families. The most obvious example is James Brady who was an assistant to President Reagan when shot in an assassination attempt. Another example is John Walsh, father of 6-year-old Adam Walsh who was abducted from a Sears store and killed. Then a partner in a hotel management company, John would become a national advocate for crime victims and host of the television show, *America’s Most Wanted*. The other side of the coin, however, is the receptiveness of political officials pleas for named laws. White, vulnerable victims can provide a valuable means for elected officials to show that they care about public safety (Socia & Brown, 2016). Would a victim named Latisha merit similar populist outrage and a willingness to devote effort to the passing of legislation named in her honor?

Second, it is unclear whether African Americans would want named laws similar to those that have been passed. To be sure, virtually any family member of any race would want the loss of a cherished relative to be treated as important. The relatives of Emmett Till, James Byrd, Jr., Louarna Gillis, and Vasean Alleyne did not protest laws in their honor. We also might imagine that the family of Trayvon Martin would welcome a statute memorializing his loss. Still, as discussed earlier (Loury, 1994), many African Americans likely see offenders not as “the other” but, to a degree, as a victim of social injustice that plagues their community. To use a family member to justify tougher sanctions that leave root causes of crime untouched would not be an appropriate honor. By contrast, they might endorse a Latisha’s Law that honored her victimization through legislation that increased funding for social programs aimed at crime prevention (Unnever et al., 2008, p. 28, fn. 4).

In closing, the challenge is how to make the lives of Black victims matter—to socially construct African Americans’ crime victimization as important and worthy of political concern by elected officials. To an extent, laws named for victims are a blip on the crime radar screen that in and of themselves may not be too significant. But taken collectively, the startling absence of Black victims in these laws points to a discounting of the suffering that these victims experience (see also Wanzo, 2009). Black victims may be viewed as part of a regrettable social problem, but they are rarely seen as individuals whose voices should be heard and whose pain should be felt. They remain nameless. Latisha and other victims deserve better—to have their fate rendered visible and to merit true concern on a daily basis.

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Appendix 1. Laws Named After Victims (1990–2016)

Name of law/act and date passed	Nature of crime committed	Race/Eth. of victim	What the law does
1. Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Previously titled the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990) Federal law: 11/08/1990	Jeanne Clery was a 19-year-old female who was raped and murdered in her campus residence hall	White	• Publishes an annual security report (ASR) • Creates a public crime log • Provides timely warnings about crimes posing a threat to students or employees
2. Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act Federal law: 11/30/1993	Jim Brady (Assistant to the President and White House Press Secretary) was a 40-year-old male when he was shot during an attempt to assassinate President Reagan	White	• Requires a background check prior to buying a gun from a licensed dealer
3. Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act Federal law: 09/13/1994	Jacob Wetterling was an 11-year-old male who was abducted at gunpoint by a masked male who was later identified after being charged for possessing/receiving child pornography	White	• Creates guidelines for all states to monitor convicted sex offenders • Requires sex offenders to register their residence for 10 years after being released into the community
4. Megan's Law New Jersey law: 10/31/1994 (later passed as a federal law on 05/17/1996)	Megan Kanka was a 7-year-old female who was lured into her neighbor's home, sexually assaulted, and murdered by a two-time convicted sex offender	White ^a	• Requires active public notification for convicted sex offenders that move to an area

(Continued)

Appendix 1. Laws Named After Victims (1990–2016)

Name of law/act and date passed	Nature of crime committed	Race/Eth. of victim	What the law does
5. Pam Lychner Sexual Offender Tracking and Identification Act of 1996 Federal law: 10/03/1996	Pam Lychner was a 31-year-old female showing a house when a convicted sex offender arrived, choked her, and tried to kidnap her until her husband showed up and stopped him—she survived the attack	White ^a	Establishes a national computer database for sex offender tracking, notification, and registration
6. Jenna's Law (Grieshaber) (The Sentencing Reform Act of 1998) New York law: 08/06/1998	Jenna Grieshaber was a 22-year-old female who was murdered in her apartment by a paroled violent felon	White ^a	- Limits parole release for first-time violent felony offenders - Subjects violent felons to post-release supervision
7. Kendra's Law New York law: 08/09/1999	Kendra Webdale was a 32-year-old female who was pushed in front of a train by an attacker who had severe mental illness	White ^a	Allows the courts to forcibly administer treatments to certain individuals with serious mental illness
8. Hillory J. Farias and Samantha Reid Date-Rape Drug Prohibition Act of 2000 Federal law: 02/18/2000	Hillory Farias was a 17-year-old female who died—reports later indicated that she had GHB in her system and it is believed that someone drugged her at a teenage dance club—a perpetrator has not been identified Samantha Reid was a 15-year-old female who was drugged with GHB and subsequently died	Hillory—Hispanic^a Samantha—White^a	- Adds GHB to the federal list of controlled substances - Creates a national campaign to raise awareness regarding date-rape drugs

Appendix 1. Laws Named After Victims (1990–2016)

Name of law/act and date passed	Nature of crime committed	Race/Eth. of victim	What the law does
9. Aimee's Law Federal law: 10/28/2000	Aimee Willard was a 22-year-old female in college who was kidnapped, raped, and killed by a convicted murderer who had been paroled before his term was up	White ^a	• Transfers federal funds to the state that obtained a conviction for an individual who had been previously convicted of a murder, dangerous sexual offense, or rape to help cover costs of incarceration and prosecution
10. Kristen's Act Federal law: 11/09/2000	Kristen Modafferi was an 18-year-old female who vanished and has never been found and a perpetrator has not been identified—family could not receive help from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children because she was legally an adult	White ^a	• Creates a national database to search for missing adults • Provides grants in order for organizations to search for missing adults
11. Scott's Law (HB180) Illinois law: 08/09/2001	Scott Gillen was a 37-year-old male firefighter who was working at the scene of an accident when he was struck by a car—he later died from his injuries	White ^a	• Increases penalties for motorists that do not yield to emergency vehicles
12. Laura's Law (Wilcox) California law: 09/28/2002	Laura Wilcox was a 19-year-old female who was shot to death by a mentally ill man who refused treatment where she volunteered	White ^a	• Gives courts the authority to force some people with severe mental illness to receive treatment

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Appendix 1. Laws Named After Victims (1990–2016)

Name of law/act and date passed	Nature of crime committed	Race/Eth. of victim	What the law does
13. AMBER Alert (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response) Federal law: 04/30/2003 (The AMBER System began in Texas in 1996, but formal legislation was not created at that time)	Amber Hagerman was 9-year-old female when she was abducted from a parking lot by an unknown male and murdered	White ^a	• Eliminates gaps in the network including interstate travel • Encourages states to develop additional elements of the AMBER alert • Acts as a nationwide point of contact for missing children • Sets minimum standards for issuing an AMBER alert
14. Laci and Conner's Law (Unborn Victims of Violence Act of 2004) Federal law: 04/01/2004	Laci Peterson was a 27-year-old female who was eight months pregnant with her son, Conner, when she disappeared—her body was later found and her husband was charged with murder	White ^a	• Mandates that harm to an unborn fetus warrants a separate charge in addition to any charges relating to the mother
15. Debbie Smith Act of 2004 (previously titled the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000) Federal law: 10/30/2004	Debbie Smith was a (approximately) 34-year-old female when a stranger entered her house, kidnapped, robbed, and raped her in the woods behind her home—she survived the assault. A DNA rape kit was immediately done, but the DNA was not matched to the national database until years later	White ^a	• Provides grants to local and state law enforcement agencies to process DNA from rape kits

Appendix 1. Laws Named After Victims (1990–2016)

Name of law/act and date passed	Nature of crime committed	Race/Eth. of victim	What the law does
16. Scott Campbell, Stephanie Roper, Wendy Preston, Louarna Gillis, and Nila Lynn Crime Victims' Rights Act Federal law: 10/30/2004	Scott Campbell was a 27-year-old male who was murdered and thrown out of a plane over the Pacific Ocean—his body has never been found	Scott— White ^a	Provides rights to crime victims at the federal level that offers protection from the accused, information on court cases, fully and timely restitution, proceedings without unreasonable delay, and the right to be treated with fairness and respect
	Stephanie Roper was a 22-year-old female who was kidnapped, raped, tortured, and murdered after her car became disabled on a rural road	Stephanie— White ^a	
	Wendy Preston was a 22-year-old female who, when out with friends, mentioned her parents would not be home for a while—the attacker overhead, followed her home, and murdered her in her Florida home	Wendy— White ^a	
	Louarna Gillis was a 22-year-old female who was shot to death by a Mexican mafia gang member (a high school peer) who wanted to move up in the hierarchy of the gang by murdering the daughter of a cop	Louarna— African American ^a	
	Nila Lynn was a 69-year-old female who was shot to death during a homeowner's association meeting because a member was unhappy with the way the association trimmed the bushes in his yard	Nila— White ^a	

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Appendix 1. Laws Named After Victims (1990–2016)

Name of law/act and date passed	Nature of crime committed	Race/Eth. of victim	What the law does
17. Jessica's Law (Jessica Lunsford Act) Florida law: 05/02/2005	Jessica Lunsford was a 9-year-old female who was kidnapped from her home, raped, and murdered (by being buried alive) by a convicted sex offender that lived across the street	White ^a	- Increases punishment by creating mandatory minimum sentences for sex offenses against children - Requires electronic monitoring of offenders under certain circumstances
18. Vasean's Law New York law: 06/03/2005	Vasean Alleyne was an 11-year-old male who was hit and killed by an intoxicated driver while crossing the street	African American ^a	Increases penalties for drivers who kill or seriously injure someone while they are driving under the influence
19. Katie's Law New Mexico law: 03/07/2006 (later passed as a federal law on 01/10/2013: Katie Sepich Enhanced DNA Collection Act of 2012)	Katie Sepich was a 22-year-old female who was abducted, raped, murdered, and burned—the perpetrator was later identified by DNA under Katie's fingernails	White ^a	Requires law enforcement to collect DNA samples from all felony offenders upon booking
20. Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 Federal law: 07/27/2006	Adam Walsh was a 6-year-old male who was abducted from a shopping mall and decapitated	White	- Creates a national sex offender registry - Establishes a three-tier classification system for sex offenders
21. Dru's Law Federal law: 07/27/2006	Dru Sjodin was a 22-year-old female who was abducted from a mall parking lot, raped, and murdered by a repeat sex offender	White ^a	Provides information on the location of registered sex offenders to the public regardless of state boundaries

Appendix 1. Laws Named After Victims (1990–2016)

Name of law/act and date passed	Nature of crime committed	Race/Eth. of victim	What the law does
22. Masha's Law Federal law: 07/27/2006	Masha Allen was a 5-year-old female when she was adopted from Russia by a man from Pittsburgh who raped and posted pornographic images of her for approximately 5 years—she survived the assaults	White ^a	- Increases penalties for individuals who download child pornography - Allows victims that are 18-years-old or older to sue those who download their images when they were children
23. Matt's Law (Carrington) California law: 09/29/2006	Matt Carrington was a 21-year-old male who died in the basement of a fraternity house located two blocks from campus as a result of hazing	White ^a	- Increases some hazing rituals from misdemeanors to felonies - Allows prosecutors to charge non-students with hazing
24. Jonathan's Law New York law: 05/05/2007	Jonathan Carey was a 13-year-old autistic male who was transferred to a state-run facility but was improperly restrained by two staff members and died by asphyxiation	White ^a	- Requires facilities to release records to parents/guardians concerning incidents or allegations of patient mistreatment - Requires facilities to create a final report for all investigations
25. Jennifer's Law Texas law: 06/15/2007	Jennifer Crecente was an 18-year-old female who was shot to death by a former boyfriend—she died a few months from graduating high school	White ^a	Allows certain school district to issue a high school diploma to a senior student who was murdered

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Appendix 1. Laws Named After Victims (1990–2016)

Name of law/act and date passed	Nature of crime committed	Race/Eth. of victim	What the law does
26. Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act of 2007 Federal law: 10/07/2008	Emmett Till was a 14-year-old male who was murdered by two White men who were tried but not convicted—the two men later admitted to murdering Emmett Till	African American	• The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Justice are ordered to investigate and prosecute homicides during the Civil Rights Era that occurred on or before December 31, 1969 • The Attorney General submits an annual report to Congress on the progress of cases
27. Marsy's Law (Victims' Bill of Rights Act of 2008) California law: 11/04/2008	Marsalee Nicholas was a 23-year-old female who was stalked and killed by her ex-boyfriend	White ^a	• Expands the rights of victims by increasing legal protection, notification of court actions, and restitution
28. Kyleigh's Law New Jersey law: 04/15/2009	Kyleigh D'Alessio was a 16-year-old female who was killed in a car crash in which another teen was driving with three passengers	White ^a	• Requires drivers under the age of 21 to display a red decal on their license plate to help identify if they are violating certain restrictions
29. Jenna's Law (Quinn) Texas law: 06/19/2009	Jenna Quinn was a 12-year-old female who was sexually abused by her male family friend (dual role as basketball coach) until her family found out and the family friend was sentenced to prison—she survived the assaults	White ^a	• Requires each school district to adopt and implement a policy addressing sexual abuse of children and that the policy be included in the district improvement plan • Requires districts to provide assistance and intervention for victims of abuse

Appendix 1. Laws Named After Victims (1990–2016)

Name of law/act and date passed	Nature of crime committed	Race/Eth. of victim	What the law does
30. Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act Federal law: 10/28/2009	Matthew Shepard was a 21-year-old male who was robbed, tortured, tied to a fence along a country road and left to die by two men who offered him a ride home from a bar—he was targeted because he was gay and died several days later	Matthew—White ^a	Enables the federal government to prosecute crimes motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender, or disability as a hate crime
	James Byrd, Jr. was a 49-year-old male who accepted a ride from three White men who beat him severely, tied him by the ankles to the back of their pickup truck, and dragged him to his death—he was targeted because of his race	James—African American	
31. Leandra’s Law (Child Passenger Protection Act) New York law: 11/18/2009	Leandra Rosado was an 11-year-old female who was killed while riding in a car driven by her friend’s intoxicated mother	Hispanic ^a	- Makes DWI’s a felony when transporting a child - Requires ignition interlock device to help prevent convicted DWI offenders from driving drunk again
32. Amanda Ross Domestic Violence Prevention Act Kentucky law: 04/26/2010	Amanda Ross was a 29-year-old female who was shot to death outside her apartment by her ex-fiancé	White ^a	Allows judges to require GPS tracking devices for anyone who violates a domestic violence order

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Appendix 1. Laws Named After Victims (1990–2016)

Name of law/act and date passed	Nature of crime committed	Race/Eth. of victim	What the law does
33. Chelsea King Child Predator Prevention Act of 2010 California law: 09/09/2010	Chelsea King was a 17-year-old female who was raped and murdered by a registered sex offender	White ^a	- Increases penalties when a sexual assault is against a person under the age of 18 - Enacts life sentences for some sexual assaults
34. Erin's Law Illinois law: 02/14/2011 (date Erin's Law Task Force created; based on the task force recommendations, additional legislation was passed on 01/24/2013)	Erin Merryn was molested and raped from age 6 to 8 ½ by an adult male neighbor and then was molested from age 11 to 13 by an older male cousin—she survived the assaults	White ^a	- Child sexual abuse prevention to be taught from pre-K through fifth grade - School personnel receive training on the signs of child sexual abuse
35. Ethen's Law (Unborn Victims of Violence Act) North Carolina law: 04/29/2011	Jenna Nielson was a 22-year-old female who was eight and a half months pregnant with Ethen when she was stabbed to death outside of a convenience store—no arrests have been made but witnesses saw a male attacker flee the scene	White ^a	- Attackers of pregnant women can be charged with a range of manslaughter charges - Perpetrator does not have to know the woman was pregnant or have intent to kill the unborn child to be charged
36. Laura's Law North Carolina law: 06/23/2011	Laura Fortenberry was a 17-year-old female who was hit head-on by a man who was intoxicated—he had been convicted of driving while intoxicated before	White ^a	- Increases jail time and fines for repeat DWI offenders - Requires convicted DWI offenders to wear electronic monitors

Appendix 1. Laws Named After Victims (1990–2016)

Name of law/act and date passed	Nature of crime committed	Race/Eth. of victim	What the law does
37. Pamela's Law New Jersey law: 08/22/2011	Pamela Schmidt was a 22-year-old female who was allegedly murdered by her boyfriend while he was suspected to be high on bath salts (later reports indicated that bath salts were not in his system at the time of the murder)	White ^a	Bans the chemicals used to create bath salts and makes them controlled substances
38. Matt's Safe School Law (Epling) Michigan law: 12/06/2011	Matt Epling was a 14-year-old male who killed himself after being bullied and assaulted at school	White ^a	Requires schools to implement anti-bullying plans and procedures
39. Caylee's Law New Jersey law: 01/05/2012	Caylee Anthony was a 2-year-old female who was found dead after her mother (Casey Anthony) did not report her missing more than 30 days after she had disappeared—no one has been convicted	White ^a	- Makes failure to report a child as missing within 24 hours a felony offense - Criminalizes failure to report a death
40. Kathy's Law California law: 09/24/2012	Kathleen Scharbarth was a 34-year-old female who was strangled to death by her ex-boyfriend after filing a restraining order	White ^a	Strengthens restraining orders by allowing judges to order electronic monitoring in certain domestic violence cases
41. Kilah's Law North Carolina law: 04/24/2013 (later passed as a federal law on 05/20/2014: Kilah Davenport Child Protection Act of 2013)	Kilah Davenport was a 3-year-old female who was severely assaulted by her stepfather—the abuse ultimately led to her death in March 2014	White ^a	Increases the penalties for convicted child abusers and mandates that their official record indicate that the victim was younger than 16-years-old

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Appendix 1. Laws Named After Victims (1990–2016)

Name of law/act and date passed	Nature of crime committed	Race/Eth. of victim	What the law does
42. Brianna's Law (SB243) Nevada law: 05/29/2013	Brianna Denison was a 19-year-old female who was abducted from a friend's house, raped, and murdered	White ^a	• Mandates that authorities take a DNA cheek swab for anyone arrested on a felony charge
43. Amelia's Law Tennessee law: 03/21/2014	Amelia Keown was a 16-year-old female killed in a two-vehicle crash with an intoxicated prison parolee	White ^a	• Requires transdermal monitoring devices or other drug/alcohol monitoring for parolees who committed crimes directly related to drugs or alcohol
44. Kelley's Law Alabama law: 04/10/2014	Kelley Rutledge Johnston (age unlisted—appears to be in her mid-twenties to early thirties from photo) was a female who was beaten and murdered by her estranged husband—she had issued a restraining order against him	White ^a	• Makes it a capital offense to murder someone when a protective order is in place over that person
45. Gwen's Law Louisiana law: 05/29/2014	Gwen Salley was a 39-year-old female who was abducted and shot to death by her estranged husband who then shot and killed himself—she was murdered one week after she filed a protective order	White ^a	• Strengthens protective orders • Requires courts to perform a risk assessment prior to releasing the individual on bail • Courts could require defendants to wear a monitoring device once released on bail
46. Kevin's Law (SB1312) Pennsylvania law: 06/30/2014	Kevin Miller was a 5-year-old male who was killed by a hit-and-run driver	White ^a	• Increases the minimum penalty for leaving the scene of a fatal hit-and-run crash

Appendix 1. Laws Named After Victims (1990–2016)

Name of law/act and date passed	Nature of crime committed	Race/Eth. of victim	What the law does
47. Amy and Vicky* Child Pornography Victim Restitution Improvement Act of 2015 Pending federal law: 02/11/2015 (passed Senate) *Pseudonyms	Amy was a 9-year-old female who was sexually assaulted by her uncle who put the pictures online Vicky was a 5-year-old female when she was initially raped by her father and took “orders” from men to make videos of her being bound and sodomized	Amy—White ^b Vicky—likely White ^b	Establishes if a victim is harmed by certain child pornography offenses they will receive mandatory restitution for damages by the perpetrator(s)
48. Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act of 2015 Federal law: 05/19/2015	Rafael Ramos (40-years-old) and Wenjian Liu (32-years-old) were male police officers sitting in their patrol car when they were shot and killed	Rafael—Hispanic ^a Wenjian—Asian	Establishes a national Blue Alert communications network when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed during duty, is missing in connection, or if threats are made against law enforcement officers
49. Eric Williams Correctional Officer Protection Act of 2015 Federal law: 03/09/2016	Eric Williams was a 34-year-old male who was stabbed to death by an inmate while he was on duty as a correctional officer	White	Authorizes correctional officers and all other employees who respond to inmate emergencies to carry pepper spray
50. Justin’s Law Pending Ohio law: 04/12/2016 (passed House)	Justin Back was an 18-year-old male who was choked, stabbed, and murdered	White ^a	Increases the number of years murderers must serve in prison before a chance for parole
51. Brandon’s Law (HB110) Ohio law: 06/13/2016	Brandon Pethtel was a 15-year-old male who was killed in a hit-and-run accident	White ^a	Increases penalties for drivers who fail to stop after an accident that results in death or serious injury

^aAs identified through photos of the victim and/or their families.^bAs determined through personal communication (July 13, 2015) with Senator Portman’s office.