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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Victims' Rights and Services Coalition Responds to Washington Supreme Court
COVID-19 Early Release Measures**

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On April 17, 2020 the National Crime Victim Law Institute (NCVLI) joined as co-amici ("friend of the court") with a coalition of organizations to urge Washington Governor Jay Inslee to remember victims' rights as the State of Washington considers the release of incarcerated individuals to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Top concerns included:

- ensuring victims' state constitutional rights to notice and to be heard are upheld for all intended releases;
- centering the safety and health needs of victims involved, especially those of violent, interpersonal, abuse-related crimes;
- an examination of any history of violent acts of the inmate to determine release, instead of simply using the "violent" or "nonviolent" classification alone to release individuals; and
- considerations of logistical difficulties with the threat of COVID-19 to victims' preparations in anticipation of the release of incarcerated persons.

April is Sexual Assault and Prevention Awareness Month which makes the actions of the Supreme Court of Washington in relation to this case all the more poignant. When the release of offenders is considered it is imperative that the Court follow the mandates of the state constitution and consider the rights, interests and needs of crime victims. This consideration must extend to the present time, even in the face the COVID-19 pandemic.

The coalition includes King County Sexual Assault Resource Center; Legal Voice; Lifewire; Northwest Justice Project; Organization for Prostitution Survivors; and the Sexual Violence Law Center.

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Founded in 2000, the [National Crime Victim Law Institute](http://www.NCVLI.org) is a national resource for crime victim lawyers and advocates to support the assertion and enforcement of victims' rights in criminal and civil processes. NCVLI continues to be the only national organization whose mission is focused on enforcement of victims' rights in the courts.