

One Hundred Fifth Congress
of the
United States of America

AT THE FIRST SESSION

*Begun and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday,
the seventh day of January, one thousand nine hundred and ninety-seven*

An Act

To amend title 18, United States Code, to give further assurance to the right of victims of crime to attend and observe the trials of those accused of the crime.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of
the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Victim Rights Clarification Act of 1997”.

SEC. 2. RIGHTS OF VICTIMS TO ATTEND AND OBSERVE TRIAL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 223 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“§ 3510. Rights of victims to attend and observe trial.

“(a) NON-CAPITAL CASES.—Notwithstanding any statute, rule, or other provision of law, a United States district court shall not order any victim of an offense excluded from the trial of a defendant accused of that offense because such victim may, during the sentencing hearing, make a statement or present any information in relation to the sentence.

“(b) CAPITAL CASES.—Notwithstanding any statute, rule, or other provision of law, a United States district court shall not order any victim of an offense excluded from the trial of a defendant accused of that offense because such victim may, during the sentencing hearing, testify as to the effect of the offense on the victim and the victim’s family or as to any other factor for which notice is required under section 3593(a).

“(c) DEFINITION.—As used in this section, the term ‘victim’ includes all persons defined as victims in section 503(e)(2) of the Victims’ Rights and Restitution Act of 1990.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 223 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“3510. Rights of victims to attend and observe trial.”.

(c) CLARIFICATION OF GROUNDS FOR EXCLUSION.—Section 3593(c) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting “For the purposes of the preceding sentence, the fact that a victim, as defined in section 3510, attended or observed the trial shall not be construed to pose a danger of creating unfair prejudice, confusing the issues, or misleading the jury.” after “misleading the jury.”.

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(d) EFFECT ON PENDING CASES.—The amendments made by this section shall apply in cases pending on the date of the enactment of this Act.

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

*Vice President of the United States and
President of the Senate.*