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Criminals Should Be Made To Reimburse Their Victims

CRIME ought to be made to pay. Not a profit for those who break the laws, but reimbursement for their victims.

Citizens who pay taxes, salute the flag and obey the law ought to be provided with a means of recouping their losses when they have been victimized.

This is seldom the case. Usually, a person who has been robbed must spend time filing a complaint, answering questions, and, if a suspect is captured, testifying in court. If the robber is convicted, tax money supports him while he is in prison and the victim is left to get over his losses the best way he can.

Full restitution cannot be made in crimes of violence. A dead person cannot be brought back to life and the crippled victim of a beating may never be able to resume normal life again. Such suffering is not limited to the victims. Families and friends are deprived of their companionship and society loses their talents and services. Many families lose their principal means of support.

A New York widow recently won a year-long fight to collect insurance on her salesman husband who was killed while trying to help capture a gunman where he was calling on a customer.

A Florida judge last month ordered a motorist who was convicted of running a red light and killing a man to help pay for education of his victim's two young children.

Retailers are compelled to spend huge sums to protect their merchandise from shoplifters and home owners are buying every type of protection equipment that the booming market offers.

A spokesman for local merchants said in a news interview that storekeepers should not trust anyone under 30 because "they're taking anything that is portable and pawnable."

Nevada has a law which requires parents to pay all legal fees, fines and retributions of costs to merchants if their minor children are caught shoplifting.

New York City spends millions of dollars yearly to clean graffiti from subways. Judges have recommended that vandals be put on cleanup crews so they will understand the seriousness of their mischief.

A judgment for damages against a penniless criminal might not have much tangible value, but it should be held against any future assets he might acquire and not be subject to cancellation by bankruptcy in the manner of ordinary debt-dodging. Crime ought to be made to pay, and criminals should do the paying!

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