S. 822, the Justice for All Act includes:

The Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Elimination Act

- The Act provides funding to states and local governments to address their backlogged rape kits and other DNA evidence at crime labs across the country.
- It has provided over $584 million to crime labs for DNA analysis that has helped identify perpetrators of the most violent crimes – rape and murder.
- The funding has made a significant dent in the national backlog of rape kits but communities across the country are still struggling to keep up with testing.
- Recently, a Massachusetts Senate Committee announced that the Boston police crime lab faces an “unprecedented backlog” of rape kits due in part to “staffing concerns.”
- In 2012, the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization (S.47) amended the Debbie Smith Act with legislation called the SAFER Act, allowing law enforcement to use the funds to count the number of untested sexual assault kits a community has in its backlog - important evidence which has never made it to the local or state crime lab.
- The Memphis Police Department recently confirmed that it has approximately 8000 untested sexual assault kits in its property rooms.

Amendments to the federal Crime Victims’ Rights Act:

- S.822 would give victims the right to be informed of their rights and available services
- The bill would give victims the right to be provided contact information for the victims' rights ombudsman.
- It would give appellate courts a longer period of time to consider an alleged violation of a victim’s right in cases where time is not of the essence and the parties agree to an extension of time. Current law requires appellate courts to rule on such claims within 72 hours; this abbreviated time for consideration has made courts reluctant to issue publishable opinions. Advocates hope this provision will lead to more thoroughly considered legal opinions regarding crime victims’ rights.
- The bill would give federal crime victims the right to timely notice of a plea bargain or deferred prosecution agreement.
- The bill clarifies the standard of review appellate courts are to use when a victim claims a violation of rights.

Tell your Senator:

- My name is _________ and I am a constituent from ________. I am calling to ask Senator _________ to cosponsor S.822, the Justice for All Reauthorization Act of 2013.
• The bill will continue crucial funding to test backlogged DNA evidence from unsolved sexual assault cases.

• Congress needs to pass this legislation quickly or funding for the Debbie Smith Act could lapse – resulting in a surge of backlogged DNA evidence at crime laboratories throughout the country and letting rapists and other criminals remain on the streets.

• It also makes important changes to federal law giving crime victims’ more rights and addressing violations of those rights.

• (Talk a bit about your program and why this is important to you).

• The bill has strong bi-partisan support and is sponsored by Senator Leahy (D-VT) and Senator Cornyn (R-TX).

• Please tell Senator ______ that I urge him/her to support this important bill and to cosponsor it today.

Thank you!