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## **National Victim's Rights Group Seeks Federal Review of Va. Tech Shootings**

**Blacksburg, Virginia**-The federal government is today being asked to investigate Virginia Tech's response to the April 16<sup>th</sup> shootings on campus in which 32 students and faculty were brutally murdered. Security On Campus, Inc. (SOC), a national non-profit victim's rights organization, is charging that waiting more than two hours to warn the campus community about the first of two shootings violated standards set by the federal Jeanne Clery Act.

"The community had no idea they were at risk when the shooter struck again," said Connie Clery, SOC's co-founder and mother of the murdered college student for whom the Jeanne Clery Act is named. "The intention of the Jeanne Clery Act is to empower the campus community to protect themselves. They were tragically denied that opportunity at Virginia Tech."

Under the Jeanne Clery Act colleges are required to issue timely warnings about homicides and certain other crimes that present an ongoing threat "as soon as the pertinent information is available." Campus police responded to the first shooting, in which two students were killed, at about 7:24 AM. No warning, however, was sent until more than two hours later at 9:26 AM. By then the shooter had moved across campus and begun a shooting spree in which 30 more people were killed before he eventually killed himself.

"We are outraged that, as the new school year begins, there has been no acknowledgement that the campus should have been warned faster," said Clery. "We are therefore asking that the U.S. Department of Education fully investigate Virginia Tech's policies to make sure that students and employees on campus are protected in the future."

Colleges which violate the Jeanne Clery Act may be fined by the U.S. Department of Education or lose their eligibility to participate in federal student aid programs.

Security On Campus, Inc. is a national non-profit (501(c)(3)) organization whose mission is to prevent violence, substance abuse and other crimes in college and university campus communities across the United States, and to compassionately assist the victims of these crimes. SOC was co-founded in 1987 by Connie & Howard Clery after their daughter Jeanne was brutally raped and murdered in her Lehigh University residence hall room.

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