



The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence provides a critical voice for sexual assault advocates in Washington, D.C.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Laurie Robinson, Elizabeth Pyke
FROM: The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
Monika Johnson Hostler, Pres. and Ellen Fern, Govt. Relations (202) 289.3900
DATE: December 12, 2008
RE: National Alliance to End Sexual Violence Policy Recommendations for the New Administration

Sexual assault is a crime with long-term significant health and economic consequences for victims, their friends, families and communities. Sexual assault victims are a large, diverse and complex group; sexual assault occurs across the lifespan and in a variety of settings: homes, schools and colleges, workplaces, and care facilities. Individuals in communities of color and Native American communities, people with disabilities and others who are disenfranchised and/or vulnerable are sexually assaulted at especially high rates.

Attempts to address sexual violence are often overly focused on sex offender legislation and initiatives that provide false fixes and can actually decrease public safety. Effective attempts to end sexual violence should be focused on evidence-based approaches to prevention, assisting victims, and controlling offenders.

Multi-agency Recommendations

Leadership and Career staff

Due to the complex and disturbing nature of sexual assault, it remains more challenging to garner public, legislative and fiscal support as well as spokespeople to address sexual assault than for other forms of violence against women.

1. Following up on President-elect Obama's and Vice-President-elect Biden's statements during the campaign, a position within the White House specifically addressing violence against women should be created. This staff position would both work on the issue within the Domestic Policy Council and would reach across federal agencies to ensure the coordination of efforts and information.
2. NAESV urges the administration to seek out appointees to positions addressing violence against who are known to have substantial and demonstrable experience in effectively addressing sexual violence. With the programmatic expansion of VAWA 2005, political appointees with a substantive knowledge of sexual violence are critical to the meaningful implementation of the law.
3. The White House and the Department of Justice should take the issue of sexual assault out of the shadows, take leadership on the issue, and make it an issue of central importance in the Administration.
4. Career staff that oversee or manage sexual assault initiatives should have credentials and experience specific to the sexual assault field.

**Interagency Coordination**

1. An effective high-level working group should be established between the White House, the FBI, the Office of Tribal Justice, OVW, OVC, NIJ, and the CDC to coordinate sexual violence services, prevention, and research. Current silos often work at cross-purposes and create unnecessary burdens for community providers.

White House Conference on Ending Sexual Violence

1. The White House should convene a conference to address prevention, intervention, and effective criminal justice responses to sexual violence.

Office on Violence Against Women

1. The Sexual Assault Services Program should be fully funded.
2. Sexual assault should have full parity under all grant programs.
3. OVW should create policy and fully exercise its authority to ensure parity for sexual assault funding at the state level where many administrative and funding decisions are made.
4. VAWA 2005 should be fully implemented including aspects of rural, legal, and housing initiatives that specifically address sexual assault.
5. The Sexual Assault Working Group of OVW should be maintained.
6. A specific focus on tribal and communities of color initiatives to address sexual violence should be fully implemented, funded and maintained.
7. Initiatives to address sexual violence in the workplace should emphasize entry level/low wage workers and immigrants.
8. OVW should embrace its role in providing national leadership on violence against women issues.

Office for Victims of Crime (OVC)

1. VOCA Funding must be protected and increased. Caps and reductions in VOCA funding violate the very purpose of the Victims of Crime Act.
2. OVC should support a balance between use of funding as long-term assistance to sustain existing victim services and funding for innovative approaches, or services to previously underserved communities.
3. OVC should create a mechanism to ensure parity for sexual assault funding as VOCA funds are administered at the state level.

Other DOJ activities

1. The Prison Rape Elimination Act should be fully implemented and collaboration and coordination should occur between this program and other DOJ initiatives as well as victim service providers.
2. Research should focus on the best strategies for reducing sex offending from prevention, mental health, services, corrections, and criminal justice perspectives. Research on evidence-based practices, as well as research on outcomes of current measures, should be provided to policy makers.
3. DOJ should collaborate with service providers, law enforcement, and others to address the sexual exploitation of minors via the internet and by other means.