



# Victim Rights Law Center

October Newsletter

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

In our work, it is easy to focus on how much there is to be done and lose sight of all that we've achieved. In September, I had the opportunity to attend events celebrating the **30th anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)** in Washington, D.C. I listened to longtime leaders share stories and anecdotes about each VAWA Reauthorization, recalling the solidarity among national stakeholders that led to critical changes impacting the lives of survivors.

I also had the privilege of joining President Biden on stage during his remarks at the White House. The South Lawn was filled with hundreds of survivors, advocates, and allies. The thread that connected each story and remark throughout the week was that leaders and changemakers led with humility, learning and listening from others in the movement. VRLC remains committed to doing the same - always keeping survivors centered in our work.

Cheers to 30 more years of moving the needle in support of survivors,

Amanda Walsh  
Deputy Director, External Affairs

## **DIRECT SERVICES**

### **Mass Law Extends Protections for Survivors**



VRLC staffers Executive Director Stacy Malone, Deputy Director of Operations Stephanie Holt and Deputy Director of External Affairs Amanda Walsh joined Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey (second from right) last month for a ceremonial signing of Bill H.4350, a bill criminalizing sexual assault by medical professionals. The law, which takes effect in November, allows the state to prosecute healthcare professionals and clergy members who misrepresent sexual activity as treatment or counseling.

Survivors like [Evelyn Yang](#) and those who experienced sexual abuse by Larry Nassar remind us of the immense bravery required to report sexual assault by highly respected community members. We are grateful for those in Massachusetts who advocated for this law and others that protect survivors.

## **Celebrating Direct Services Staff**



The Massachusetts Direct Services team gathers every other month for professional development and team-building. Late last month they also had the chance to celebrate one of our staff attorneys who is preparing for family leave.

## Protecting Student Survivors



In September, VRLC Deputy Director, Amanda Walsh, joined a panel at the Massachusetts State House focused on the needs of campus survivors of sexual assault in Massachusetts. The event was hosted by the [Governor's Council to Address Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, and Human Trafficking](#), Representative Tricia Bouvier-Farley, Senator Moore and the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. Amanda joined Title IX coordinators, campus and community-based advocates, student activists and other allies to discuss the implementation of [Massachusetts' Campus Sexual Assault Law](#) (Chapter 337 of the Acts of 2020).

## DEVELOPMENT

## CNN's Dana Bash Joins Shining Star Celebration



CNN Anchor and Chief Political Correspondent Dana Bash will speak at Victim Rights Law Center's (VRLC) **Shining Star Celebration**. Bash, a fixture in modern political coverage for more than 30 years with CNN, will introduce **Evelyn Yang, VRLC's 2024 Leadership Awardee**. Bash notes that a highlight of her career was the 2020 interview with Evelyn Yang during Yang's husband's Presidential run in which Yang revealed that she was sexually assaulted by her doctor while she was pregnant.

VRLC will honor Evelyn Yang and all of our 2024 Shining Star Awardees Thursday, October 10 (6:00 - 8:00 pm) at Artists for Humanity Epicenter in Boston. It's not too late to join us for an evening of networking, refreshments and celebration of those who inspire VRLC's efforts to help sexual assault survivors rebuild their lives and pursue justice. Tickets are still available [here](#).

Can't attend? You can still make a difference. Donate [here](#).

### **NATIONAL TRAINING**

### **30 Years of VAWA**



Deputy Director Amanda Walsh, pictured above behind President Biden, represented VRLC at the White House celebration of the **30th anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**. In addition to joining the president on stage alongside others in the anti-gender-based violence community, while in D.C., Amanda also gathered with staff from **National Organization for Victim Advocacy**, Mississippi Coalition Against Sexual Assault, **Clery Center**, Soteria Solutions and other organizations at the Technical Assistance provider meeting.



## Supporting Transgender Survivors

### Improving Access to Legal Advocacy for Transgender Survivors

**Webinar:** Tuesday, October 15, 10-11:30am PT/1-2:30pm ET

**Discussion Session:** Wednesday, October 16, 10-11am PT/1-2pm ET

Non-attorney legal advocates! Join VRLC as we explore opportunities to improve access to services for transgender survivors of gender-based violence. This webinar will focus on enhancing both individuals' and organizations' capacities to provide safe, affirming, and supportive advocacy. Presenters will discuss the unique needs of trans and gender-diverse clients, consider common barriers to accessing services, and review practical approaches and tools for providing support. Register today [here](#).



*Special thanks to our Justice partner Dechert for supporting VRLC's efforts to help sexual assault survivors rebuild their lives and pursue justice.*

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