

Sexual assault survivors
can get justice.

You can help.





Abby's Story



In my second year of college, I was assaulted by a student from a nearby university. The Victim Rights Law Center represented me throughout my year-long case.

It was scary for me—a huge leap of faith to reach out for legal help. I knew that frequently victims aren't believed, and there was a gap in time between when the assault happened and when I reported it.

My case got complicated very fast, and my VRLC attorney was extraordinarily helpful. She explained all my options and sat with me through my interviews at the school.

She always let me steer the ship so I could decide the justice I wanted, which was an acknowledgment that something happened to me and what had happened was wrong.

In the end, he was found to be at fault. He was essentially expelled and his countersuit was dismissed, and that was the best outcome for me.

— ABBY KELLEY, J.D.

You are invited to join us in transforming the national response to sexual violence.

Most survivors of sexual assault never get justice. The U.S. criminal justice system is focused on the accused; it isn't designed to help survivors rebuild their lives.

But there's a solution: civil legal representation.

For over 20 years, Victim Rights Law Center (VRLC) has been at the forefront of the movement to help survivors define what justice means for themselves—and get it—through civil litigation.

It's a novel approach that works: VRLC provides sexual assault survivors with expert assistance on complex legal issues to address their basic and immediate needs. With a lawyer by their side, our clients regain their voices and transform their lives.

Since our beginnings in Massachusetts and our expansion to Oregon, we've helped countless survivors pursue their own paths to justice.

Now, we need your financial support to expand our legal services and training efforts to all corners of the country, so every sexual assault survivor has immediate access to a VRLC-trained attorney to fight for the privacy, safety and resources needed to rebuild their lives.

Armed with dynamic leadership, a roadmap for growth, a powerhouse team of dedicated attorneys and educators, and an unparalleled track record of successes, we're ready to revolutionize justice for sexual assault survivors.

All that's missing is you.



We are *the first* nonprofit law center in the nation dedicated to serving the legal needs of sexual assault victims.

You may have already seen some of our achievements:

- Represented** | almost 10,000 sexual assault survivors with 34,000 legal matters in Massachusetts and Oregon.
- Trained** | and mentored 24,000 attorneys and advocates around the country to support victims of sexual violence.
- Established** | the only national conference on sexual assault legal issues, drawing hundreds of lawyers and legal advocates biannually.
- Sued** | the U.S. Department of Education and the Trump administration to secure the rights of survivors who are students.
- Formed** | a partnership with the federal Office on Violence Against Women Campus Grant Program to train and support thousands of student conduct personnel every year.
- Documented** | pervasive sexual harassment in the U.S. Antarctic Program as a member of a consulting team funded by the National Science Foundation.
- Provided** | legal expertise and survivor insights to critical legal cases impacting survivors' rights by submitting and signing onto dozens of amicus briefs locally and nationally.

More survivors need us—and you.

We must expand our reach so that survivors in every state can access an expert attorney to fight for their privacy, safety, and legal rights—and rebuild their lives.



A Parent's Story

“ Our brilliant, beautiful, kind girl couldn't get out of bed. There were panic attacks, depression, thoughts of suicide, struggles to pass basic classes.

All because of the trauma responses she was having.

If sexual trauma happens to a young child, it negatively affects their growth and development even if it seems they may function well for a while. And it's shocking to me that teachers and administrators still lack understanding about that.

I watched my husband struggle with the devastation our entire family was enduring. We begged law enforcement to pursue the offender, which they didn't do.

Everything could have been different if our family had known about the Victim Rights Law Center ten years earlier. We would have had the trauma-informed specialist and legal support from the beginning. Our daughter would have had some form of justice. Instead, I spent years wondering if my daughter was going to live through each day.

After my first meeting with VRLC attorneys, I felt 50 pounds lighter. Our daughter has since received support from VRLC in many ways.

I don't know what to say other than thank you. The last few years I've watched her bloom into the woman I knew she could become.

— L.N.*

“ I felt like our daughter was leaning over a cliff, and I had a rope around her trying to pull her back. Sometimes it was very lonely, but VRLC ended up pulling with me.

A Trailblazing Approach that Works

No stigma. No barriers.

At VRLC, sexual assault survivors define their own justice. It looks different for each person.

Our legal intake process is holistic. We look at the whole person, identifying their unique needs and the overlay of laws that can be used creatively to rebuild their lives.

Our legal services are free. That's because most survivors can't afford the steep costs of sexual assault. The average long-term economic impact of rape has been estimated to be \$158,676 per person.

All VRLC attorneys are trauma trained. From their first phone call to VRLC, survivors speak to a lawyer or paralegal specially trained in working with survivors of sexual violence.

Attorneys with different expertise coordinate legal strategy. Most survivors average three legal needs, such as education, housing, or employment. Our legal team possesses diverse expertise and navigates laws from the perspectives of people who have experienced trauma.

We recognize the intersecting identities of many survivors (age, race, sexual orientation, gender, ability, immigration status)—as well as the biases present in society—and their impact on survivors' legal needs.

We fiercely advocate for public policies and laws to expand and enforce the rights of sexual assault survivors.

We activate the expertise of pro bono attorneys, putting more boots on the ground in the fight for justice. With this collective wisdom, we can serve more survivors and design more creative legal strategies.

“Our trauma-informed, expert team of attorneys wraps their arms around the survivor to support them in many ways. And every client gets the benefit of multiple legal minds in different practice areas. It's a unique way to practice law that other firms don't do.

— STACY MALONE
VRLC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Justice can't wait. The time for action is *now*.

The legal needs of three quarters of all sexual assault survivors around the country are ignored and unmet. *That's unacceptable.*

Right now...

- ▶ A high school student is on the brink of dropping out because the assailant and his friends harass her in the school hallways.
- ▶ A woman is at risk of losing her job if she refuses to work alongside the coworker who raped her.
- ▶ A young man's therapy records are being subpoenaed by his assailant's legal team to attack his credibility.
- ▶ An immigrant worker endures their employer's repeated assaults, fearful of deportation if the attacks are reported.



These survivors need attorneys who can use the law: to ensure the school provides accommodations, from safety planning to a school transfer; to push the employer to provide a new work schedule or location; to protect survivors' medical and mental health records from being used against them; to secure immigration status while the survivor cooperates with law enforcement.

There are too many survivors of sexual violence who have nowhere to turn for such legal support. With your help, that can change. VRCLC must urgently extend our reach to the survivors desperate for assistance in other states.

Will you stand with us in this fight for justice?

“ VRCLC fields questions on important, complicated legal issues from agencies around the country. For example, when must shelters give police access to assault survivors? What is required to obtain the various types of protective orders? The answers depend on your location.

Our pro bono attorneys conduct research so VRCLC can share the results with all its community partners. As a result of research like this, shelters now know their rights and obligations and can assist survivors more effectively.

Imagine the impact of that around the country.
How many times were a survivors' rights forfeited because an agency or shelter didn't know what to do?



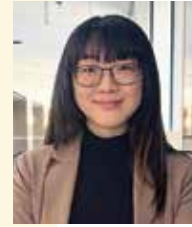
SCOT H. FISHMAN, ESQ.
PARTNER AND DIRECTOR OF PRO BONO
SHOOK, HARDY & BACON L.L.P.
WASHINGTON, D.C.



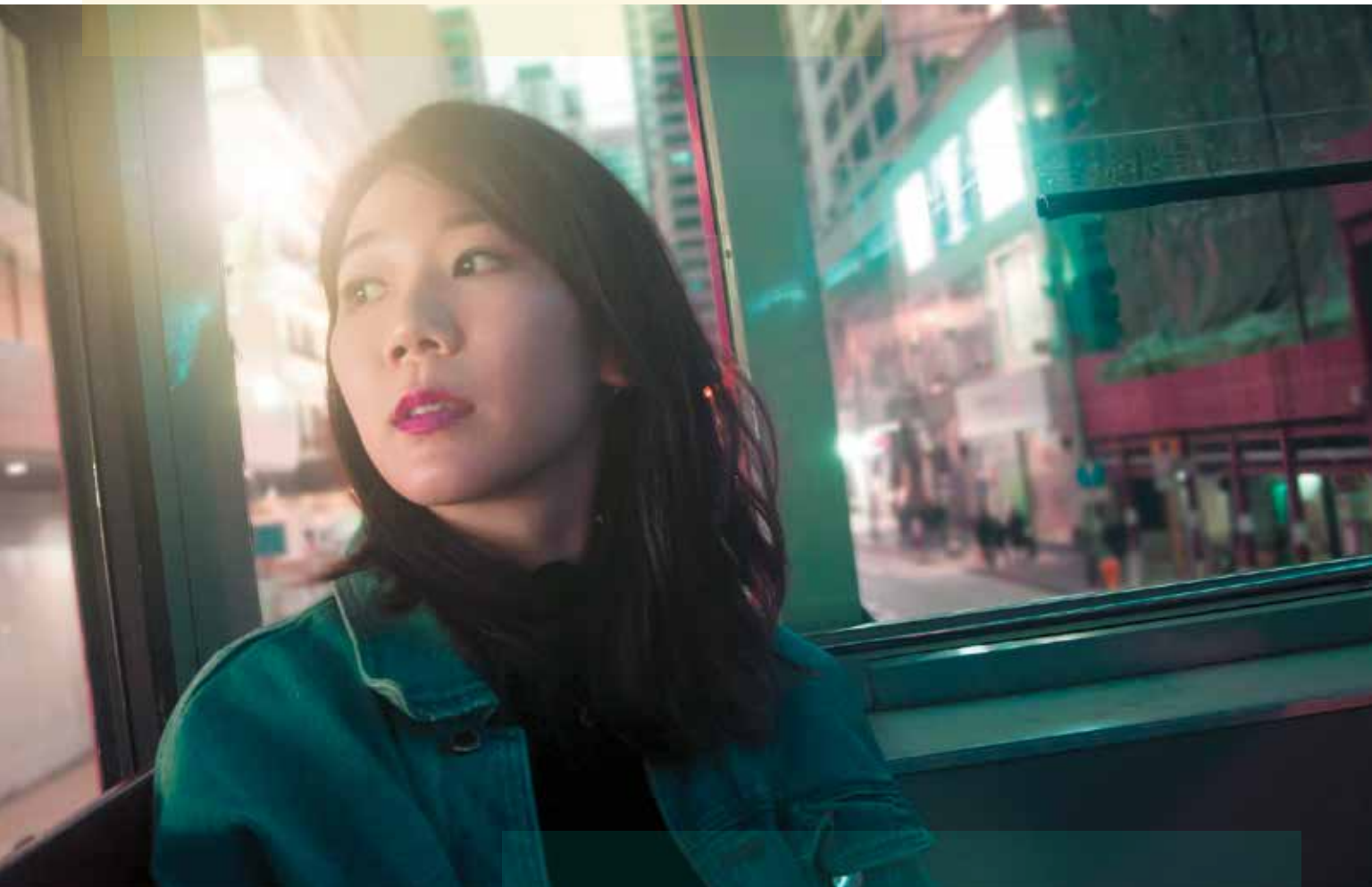
Here in Georgia's large Asian communities, there's shame associated with sexual assault. People don't feel safe talking about it or seeking help. During VRLC's training, we discussed how differently justice might be viewed in cultures like ours.

And, as attorneys, we need to give survivors autonomy to choose what their justice looks like. It might not be the stereotypical, 'Let's report this and get it prosecuted.' Instead, it might be, 'Let me just get away from this perpetrator. That's justice to me.'

We need to honor how very culturally specific justice can be.



ESTHER KO, ESQ.
BILINGUAL STAFF ATTORNEY
MOAIC, GEORGIA
DULUTH, GA



One of the most compelling stories about VRLC's history is how many lives have been changed because of the intervention of their great lawyers. A survivor comes in, gets a lawyer, and their life is on a new trajectory.

VRLC has trained lawyers all over the country so it can expand its reach, but the role of philanthropy is essential in training more.

If every person who'd been raped could be helped within 24 hours in this country, we'd see real change. That's the goal.

GEORGIA MURRAY
DONOR
FORMER VRLC BOARD CHAIR
BOSTON, MA



Imagine a future...

...where EVERY survivor, in EVERY state, has swift access to civil legal representation from a dedicated attorney trained in the effects of trauma.

With their attorney at their side fighting for their well-being, survivors could achieve the justice they choose and safely navigate the emotional and practical challenges on the path to restoring their lives. Imagine the untold suffering averted—and the lives saved.

**Will you help make that dream a reality?
We can't do it alone. We need your support.**

Your investment in VRCL will fund an ambitious action plan to scale our free civil legal services, training, and advocacy efforts to help sexual assault survivors in every state in the nation.

Your gifts will:

- ▶ Train and mentor a network of lawyers throughout the U.S. so more survivors get the representation they need.
- ▶ Increase advocacy efforts to create stronger policies and laws on state and federal levels.
- ▶ Sustain an emergency fund for medical examinations, filing fees, expert witnesses and other critical case support that can delay legal cases when a client is unable to pay.
- ▶ Develop and distribute educational materials for parents and young survivors to understand and exercise their rights under the U.S. Department of Education Title IX Rule.
- ▶ Update and expand our legal team's technology and infrastructure.
- ▶ Pilot revenue-generating programs that will help cover the costs of our operations and innovative programs.



Maddy's Story

“ I'm a survivor. I know what it's like to be in these situations and not know where to turn for help. Now, as a pro bono VRLC attorney, I want to lighten the load for survivors who interact with the legal system. We must earn the trust of our clients because the systems in our country may have betrayed that trust and disrespected their inherent dignity.

Folks on the other side are getting savvier. A common tactic of defense attorneys is to seek our clients' private immigration, counseling, or medical records to intimidate them.

But we are not going to let offenders use the legal system to invade privacy and weaponize the care our clients have sought for themselves.

VRLC provides access to wraparound services from financial literacy to immigration services for survivors. Sexual violence can touch every single aspect of our clients' lives, and we want them to be able to come to us, feel safe, and be restored as a person.



MADDY RODRIGUEZ, ESQ.
PARTNER AND CO-CHAIR, EDUCATION
FOLEY HOAG
BOSTON, MA



Let's have a conversation about how you can help sexual assault survivors *anywhere in the country* get the legal assistance they need.

Contact

Ellen Leuchs
Director of Development
Victim Rights Law Center
eleuchs@victimrights.org
(617) 399-6720 ext. 21

Donate

Visit victimrights.org/make-an-impact/ to explore how you can contribute and make justice possible for sexual assault survivors.



I've learned so much about how resilient survivors are. Through all the trauma, they can listen to us lay out all the legal options and make the right decisions for themselves. I work with young victims—some eight and nine years old—and even they know what they want. Our hope is that, with our support, survivors can reclaim their selves, be strong, and go forward with their lives.



KAYLA HOGAN-DALY, ESQ.
STAFF ATTORNEY
VRLC
BOSTON, MA

Above: Our attorneys let survivors define their own justice. VRLC attorneys Nora Grais-Clements and Katrina Eberly consult with a client at Palmer District Court in Massachusetts. [Credit: Jake Koteen Photography]*

* VRLC prioritizes survivors' privacy. Within these pages, we honor the wishes of those who prefer not to use their names—as well as those who do—to advance public understanding. Unless otherwise noted, stock images are used throughout.



victimrights.org

Massachusetts

11 Beacon Street, Suite 520, Boston, MA 02108
(617) 399-6720

Oregon

610 SW Broadway, Suite 308, Portland, OR 97205
(503) 274-5477

E. Jean Carroll is a symbol of bravery and persistence for survivors. At our 2023 annual event, we honored her attorney, Robbie Kaplan, for doing exactly what we do at VRLC: creatively using civil law to secure justice for sexual assault survivors. Using a law typically wielded to silence victims, they held E. Jean's perpetrator, a former U.S. president, accountable for sexual assault and defamation. VRLC Executive Director Stacy Malone is pictured here with E. Jean celebrating that success.

