



Victim Rights Law Center

May Newsletter

Dear Friends,

Last month, we observed Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)—a time to amplify survivors' voices and highlight the critical importance of victim services. Typically, SAAM allows us to strengthen our shared commitment to ending sexual violence.

But this year brought a different kind of urgency. More than \$800 million in essential Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding was slashed—funding that supports crisis hotlines, shelters, legal advocacy, and anti-trafficking efforts. These services aren't "wasteful," as labeled by the Attorney General—they are life-saving, cost-effective, and community-anchoring. Cutting them carries a far greater cost: one measured in human suffering and public safety.

Still, there were bright spots. Read on to learn more about our annual SAAM event, VRLC's lawsuit against the Department of Education, and how our Massachusetts staff continues its quest to try every escape room in the state!

Gratefully,
Stacy

IN THE NEWS

Fighting for Student-Survivors

Last month, VRLC **filed an important lawsuit** in response to the devastating cuts to the Department of Education. In March, the Secretary of Education took the first steps in her plan to dismantle the Department of Education, closing many regional Offices for Civil Rights (OCR), including the Boston office.



Student-survivors of sexual assault rely on OCR to hold schools accountable when they have failed to protect and support those who have been victimized. VRLC will continue to fight to preserve vital supports for survivors in education settings and beyond.

Celebrating our 2025 Leadership Awardees



Attorneys Stéphane Babonneau and Antoine Camus gained global notoriety in 2024 while representing Gisèle Pelicot, a French woman who was secretly drugged and raped by her husband and 49 others.

We are proud to honor this legal team, their commitment to preserving their clients' dignity and their relentless pursuit of justice, with our 2025 Shining Star Leadership Award.

Join VRLC as we celebrate Babonneau, Camus, and our other

awardees at our 2025 Shining Star Celebration, Thursday, October 9 (6:00 - 8:30 p.m.) at [Artists for Humanity EpiCenter](#) in Boston. Learn more [here](#).

Stand Up, Speak Up Blog



Don't miss the most recent installment of our Stand Up, Speak Up blog series, *Advocacy Confidential*.

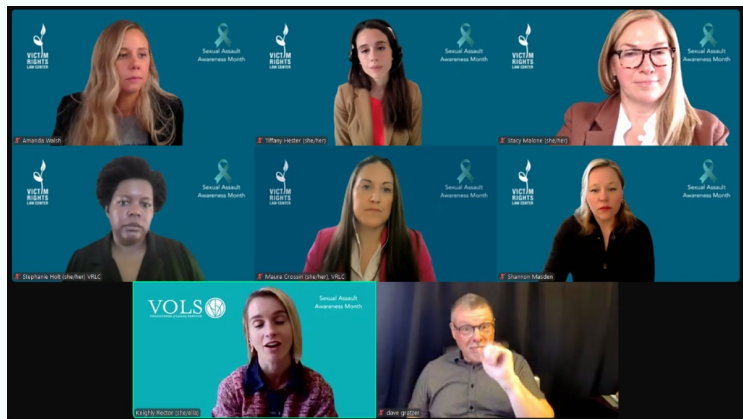
In this latest entry, VRLC Senior Attorney Carol Schrader continues to highlight the significance of confidentiality in the anti-sexual violence movement and shares one of her favorite programs for survivors. Check it out [here](#).

NATIONAL TRAINING

SAAM Panel Success

More than 280 attorneys, legal advocates, survivors, and allies joined VRLC for our annual virtual Legal Insights panel on April 29th. Together, we explored important current issues in sexual violence law.

Thank you to both our



panelists, including Keighly Rector, Esq., Director of the Immigration Project at [Volunteers of Legal Service \(VOLS\)](#), and participants for supporting this opportunity to gather online and engage in these critical conversations.

"I am so appreciative of your leadership, your endless education and training for our work," one participant shared. "Your beautiful smiles always brighten my screen in what seems like the darkest of times!"

MISC/FUN NEWS

Out of the Office



From solving puzzles to raising glasses—team bonding, one escape (room or bar) at a time!

VRLC staff in Massachusetts (above) and Oregon (below) recently enjoyed some time outside of the office together.



DONATE

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