



# Victim Rights Law Center

July/August Newsletter

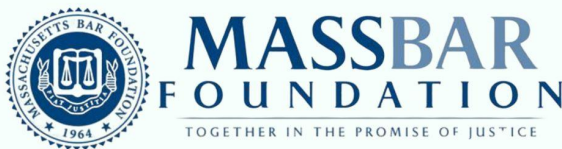
Dear Friends,

**Our fight** to protect the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) continues this summer. At the heart of this effort are students – students who need support accessing their education when schools fail them. This month, VRLC Deputy Director Amanda Walsh shared one survivor's story, highlighting OCR's intervention as the likely difference between the student graduating or dropping out of high school. Read the blog [here](#) and consider **supporting our efforts** to push back against the decimation of the Department of Education.

In gratitude,  
Stacy

## IN THE NEWS

### Grant Gratitude



Grant funds from donors like the [Boston Bar Foundation](#) (BBF) [Massachusetts Bar Foundation](#) (MBF) and [Sincere Foundation](#) play a vital role in maintaining VRLC operations and the advancement of our mission to seek justice for every survivor.

Thank you to BBF, MBF, and the Sincere Foundation for generously awarding VRLC in their most recent rounds of grant funding.

These foundations provide funding that gives life-saving support to some of the most vulnerable communities in Massachusetts.

### Fighting to Restore the OCR

VRLC continues to advocate for the restoration of the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR).

*The Bay State Banner*

highlighted the impacts of these stark reductions to the OCR, and Dept. of Education as a whole, in an article published July 30th. VRLC Deputy Director of External Affairs Amanda Walsh shared that, despite a federal mandate for the OCR to continue to support students, VRLC has had no contact regarding student-survivors' cases in six weeks and counting. Read *The Banner's* story [here](#).

Check out our recent social media [posts](#) sharing the integral role that OCR and its regional offices play for student-survivors when their school communities don't protect their rights.

In our most recent blog entry, Deputy Director Amanda Walsh shares an experience representing a middle school student-survivor and the positive impact the OCR made in that student's journey.

"OCR has long been plagued with a backlog of cases and slow response times, Amanda writes, "but that's evidence that it is a critical resource for students and their families. There is no filing fee, no complicated pleadings and motions, and no requirement to have legal counsel – making it more accessible to students and their families."

Read the blog in full [here](#).

## NATIONAL TRAINING

### Empower Survivors at NSVLC 2025



Find inspiration and connection at VRLC's [2025 National Sexual Violence Law Conference!](#) Join experts and innovators in the gender-based violence field as we explore privacy, safety, immigration, education, and other practice areas essential to serving survivors.

**NSVLC 2025 or BUST!**

Don't let funding request questions keep you from experiencing NSVLC 2025! We have resources that can

help. Visit our Frequently Asked Questions at the bottom of the conference [website](#) for an OVW funding request letter template, sample cost estimate, and a downloadable copy of the conference agenda to include in your submission. Need additional assistance processing your funding request? Email us at [conference@victimrights.org](mailto:conference@victimrights.org).

**When:** October 21-22, 2025

**Where:** [The Palmer House Hotel](#), Chicago, IL

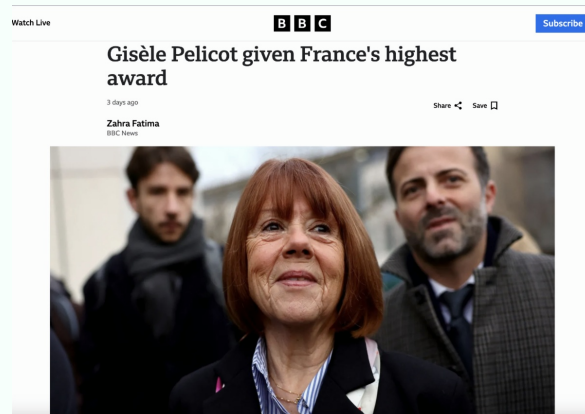
Learn more about NSVLC and register today [here](#).

## EVENTS

### Tickets Coming Soon

The countdown to our 2025 Shining Star Celebration is on!

Join us, along with 2025 Shining Star Awardees [Antoine Camus](#) and [Stéphane Babonneau](#), attorneys for Gisèle Pelicot, who was recently bestowed France's [highest award](#) for exceptional merit and service to the country. Pelicot gained international recognition after waiving her right to anonymity and publicly testifying at her mass-rape trial last year.



We can't wait to shine a light on the contributions of our awardees, pro bono attorneys, and sponsors - and to mark another year of collective work on behalf of sexual assault survivors!

**When:** October 9 (6:00 - 8:30 p.m.)

**Where:** [Artists for Humanity EpiCenter](#), Boston

Ticket sales open August 21. Learn more [here](#).

### Celebrating Pro Bono Partners



VRLC Deputy Director of Operations Stephanie Holt (left) recently joined [Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.](#)'s Pro bono Award Ceremony in Boston. Stephanie spoke in recognition of Mintz attorney and 2025 awardee Courtney Herndon's (middle) work supporting a VRLC client.

"She brought not only her legal brilliance, but also compassion, strength, and an unwavering commitment to justice. In a process that often feels dehumanizing and

retraumatizing for survivors, Courtney made me feel heard, protected, and never alone," the client, said of her VRLC attorney.

We are proud to uplift the accomplishments of our dedicated pro bono attorneys. Learn more about VRLC's pro bono opportunities [here](#).

[DONATE](#)

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