



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I'm excited to guest write this month! I'm a litigator in the Commercial Litigation Group at WilmerHale—but since May, I've had the privilege of working at VRLC as part of a fellowship. I've been a pro bono attorney for VRLC for years and have long admired VRLC's survivor-centered work.

That admiration has only grown as I've gotten an up-close look at the work VRLC's attorneys do every day for their clients. I've been fortunate enough during my time here to work directly with clients—helping them obtain restraining orders, keeping their privileged records private by opposing Rule 17 motions in their criminal cases, and giving them advice on the myriad legal concerns that arise in the wake of an assault. I've learned so much from my brilliant colleagues here at VRLC who have been dedicated to this work for years. In addition to the direct client work, I've also taken on a variety of strategic projects including drafting amicus briefs, and spearheading a defamation research project.

I've been honored to play a small role in VRLC's mission to transform the response to sexual violence and encourage other private attorneys to become more engaged with VRLC's pro bono work! If you're interested, reach out today [here](#).

Best,

Tess Foley
WilmerHale Pickering Fellow

NATIONAL TRAINING

Training National Guard Special Victims' Counsel



Earlier this month, VRLC Deputy Director of External Affairs Amanda Walsh had the opportunity to train National Guard Special Victims' Counsel (SVCs) at Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford, MA.

SVCs provide confidential legal representation to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence who are National Guard members, their immediate family members, and other eligible civilian employees. The group included SVCs

who support victims throughout the eastern region of the U.S.

VRLC in DC



Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Shultz pictured with staff from Volare, NOVA, Arnold and Porter, and VRLC.

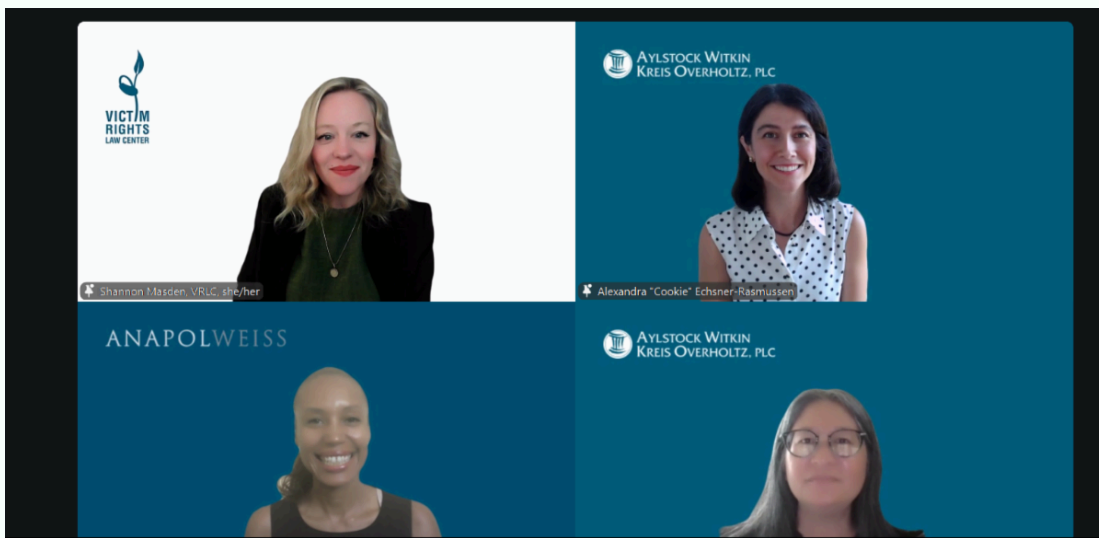
On September 22, VRLC joined representatives from [Volare](#), the [National Organization for Victim Advocacy](#) (NOVA), and the [National Center for Victims of Crime](#) in Washington, D.C. for Hill Day to advocate for reforms to the [Crime Victims' Rights Act](#) (CVRA).

While the CVRA does grant important protections, gaps in the existing law can hinder survivors' ability to exercise these rights. The Courtney Wild Reinforcing Crime Victims' Rights Act (H.R. 5506) seeks to modernize the CVRA by clarifying crucial provisions of the law - stronger protections during investigations, better access to independent legal counsel, timely notice of matters affecting survivors' rights and safety, and greater accountability when rights are violated.

We're grateful for this opportunity to come together and highlight the need for stronger protections and greater accountability when rights are violated.

Learn more about all proposed reforms [here](#) and [find your members of Congress](#) to tell them you support strengthening the CVRA.

Watch Now: Online Playground



From top left: Virtual Playground moderator Shannon Masden and panelists Alexandra (Cookie) Echsner-Rasmussen, Kristen Gibbons Feden, and Mary Liu.

The recording and resources are available now for The Online Playground, our free virtual panel held earlier this month.

Panelists explored the risks kids encounter on gaming platforms, how predators use these spaces for grooming, and practical steps adults can take to help keep kids safer online.

Watch the recording and explore the resources [here](#), then share them with friends, family members, and colleagues who have young gamers in their lives.

NATIONAL TRAINING

NSVLC 2027 Workshop Spotlight

WORKSHOP SPOTLIGHT

When Survivors Speak:
Defamation, Retaliation, & the Emerging Movement
to Protect Survivor Speech


Victoria Burke, Esq.
Speak Your Truth Act
Nationwide Movement


Anne Marie Hauben
Survivors' Solidarity March

 **Sheraton New Orleans Hotel**
March 9 - 10, 2027

Survivors are told to speak up, but what happens when speaking the truth leads to a defamation lawsuit?

Join us in New Orleans, March 9-10 for [2027 National Sexual Violence Law Conference](#) (NSVLC) workshop **When Survivors Speak: Defamation, Retaliation, & the Emerging Movement to Protect Survivor Speech**. Victoria Burke, Esq., of Speak Your Truth Act Nationwide Movement, and co-presenter Anne Marie Hauben of Survivors' Solidarity March will examine legal reforms and practical strategies that can help ensure survivors do not have to choose between speaking their truth and risking financial ruin.

The countdown is on to NSVLC! This workshop is one of many opportunities to explore critical issues in sexual violence law. Connect with and learn from leaders in the field from across the country while taking in the culture, historic streets, and spirit that make New Orleans a memorable destination.

Register today [here](#)!

DEVELOPMENT

There's Still Time! Join Us for Shining Star Celebration

VRCL's [2026 Shining Star Celebration](#) is just a few days away, and there's still time to get your tickets!



Join us on October 1 as we honor this year's remarkable awardees and support life-saving legal services for survivors.

We are excited to welcome inspiring survivor advocate and survivor of Jeffrey Epstein's abuse Courtney Wild, who will join us to introduce her attorney and 2026 Leadership Awardee Brad Edwards, Esq.

Get your Shining Star Celebration tickets today [here](#).

Can't make it on October 1? Our silent auction is open now! Check out some unforgettable offerings including exciting getaways, Patriots tickets, a custom-planned Murder Mystery party, and more. Explore all of our silent auction offerings [here](#).

Thank you to our Funding Partners!



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