

ADVOCATING FOR SURVIVORS

In Partnership With:



National Alliance to
End Sexual Violence

TODAY YOU WILL GAIN...

- Important updates on critical legislation like the ongoing reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)
- Guidance on how to advocate for the needs and rights of survivors through local action
- Insight into the importance of raising your voice in support of survivor-centric legislative priorities

INTRODUCTION



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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ADVOCACY

- **Gender-Based Violence (GBV) advocacy** is about centering the voices and needs of survivors, advocating for the needs and capacity-building ability of service providers, and understanding how those needs show up in and are affected by laws and regulatory structures
- Local advocacy, such as grassroots organizing and mobilizing local partners or the general public, is essential to creating change at every level

THE NATIONAL TASK FORCE TO END SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- **The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence (“NTF”)** is focused on the development, passage, and implementation of effective public policy to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking
- The NTF is comprised of a large and diverse group of national, tribal, state, territorial, and local organizations, as well as individuals, committed to securing an end to violence against women

ADMINISTRATIVE ADVOCACY

- Administrative advocacy examines how agencies that respond to survivors actually implement their policies and ensures that the application of those policies are actually helpful to survivors
 - This can be done at any level - local, state, or federal
- Submitting “comments” during agencies’ open comment periods is a very effective advocacy tool
 - Advocacy organizations will often release the comments they submitted, you can use them as a model
- Consider submitting a comment on behalf of your organization or group, and note your affiliation or expertise in the subject matter

SURVIVOR ADVOCACY

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**ADVOCACY EFFORTS OF ANY
KIND LED BY SURVIVORS**

Centering marginalized populations
is important to account for the
diverse experiences and needs of
survivors.

AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

- Get involved in local government and get to know organizations beyond traditional gender-based violence service providers
 - Think about transitional housing systems, religious organizations, cultural groups/organizations, etc
- Organizations serving communities of color or LGBTQ+ individuals frequently respond to and serve survivors within their own communities, and are in many cases a survivors main resource
- NAESV has a district advocacy toolkit that you can use to plan meetings with your legislators
 - Download the toolkit on this webinar webpage!
- Don't assume that advocacy is already happening or being organized around gender-based violence issues

MORE ON THE ISSUES

➤ Reauthorization of VAWA

➤ VAWA has expired, but the funding for VAWA is still active
An un-reauthorized VAWA is not an unfunded VAWA

➤ NAESV's current priority is to avoid a "straight reauthorization" without changes to the current version of VAWA, and instead to use this opportunity to expand VAWA to include important provisions such as:

➤ More funding for prevention

➤ More funding for sexual assault services

➤ Tribal sovereignty on sexual assault issues

MORE ON THE ISSUES

- **Tribal Sovereignty on Sexual Assault Issues**
 - Tribes have jurisdiction over non-tribal people in cases of domestic violence on tribal lands (reservations)
 - Only the federal government has jurisdiction over non-tribal people who commit sexual assault on tribal lands, and the process for bringing about legal charges is difficult and ineffective
 - This creates an loophole in the system whereby non-tribal people can commit acts of gender-based violence without any substantive consequences

MORE ON THE ISSUES

- **Protecting the LGBTQ+ Anti-Discrimination Clause**
 - In federal legislation, there is no federal law prohibiting discrimination of LGBTQ+ populations, with the exception of VAWA
- **Firearms Provisions**
 - Provisions are being debated that would make it easier for law enforcement to remove firearms from people who are not living in the same home as the people they have abused

HOW TO TAKE ACTION

- **Talk about what VAWA is doing for you and survivors in your community.** Understand the connection between this federal bill and what's happening to survivors at a local level
- **Dispel myths about the process.** An expired VAWA does not mean an unfunded VAWA
- **Join lists that will let you know when it's time to mobilize.** NAESV and other national organizations have lists where people can sign up for action alerts
- **Connect with your Senators.** Look at the Senate calendar and check when they are home in your district to have meetings

ABOUT NAESV

- The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence educates the policy community about federal laws, legislation and appropriations impacting the fight to end sexual violence. Its team of experts and advocates, donating time away from their state and local groups, publish written analysis, track legislation, provide media interviews, and advise members of Congress and the executive branch

- Find more information about NAESV at www.endsexualviolence.org

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