

Bipartisan Task Force To End Sexual Violence

**117TH CONGRESS
LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

2021 - 2022

DEAR FRIEND,

When we teamed up to launch the Bipartisan Task Force to End Sexual Violence in April 2017, it would have been hard to imagine how this issue would evolve over the next 5 years. The national conversation surrounding assault, harassment, stalking, exploitation, and trafficking has been brought to the forefront to a degree never before seen – but long overdue. We have garnered a better understanding of how to prevent and eliminate this violence. Thanks to survivors who bravely came forward, Americans have learned the chilling truth about how pervasive and horrific these acts can be.

After taking turns reading the victim impact statement of Jane Doe, who we and the world now know as Chanel Miller, on the floor of the House in 2016, we recognized that it was important for Congress to come together to tackle this crisis of sexual violence in a bipartisan way. Our roundtables and legislative agenda provide opportunities for members from both sides of the aisle to learn more from survivors and experts and then take substantive action.

In the 117th Congress, our Task Force and its members have proudly championed commonsense, bipartisan bills to combat the scourge of sexual violence, including those contained in this agenda. Together, we reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act for the first time in 9 years. We enacted landmark legislation to void mandatory arbitration clauses that have curtailed the legal options of employees and customers who come forward with sexual assault or harassment claims. Congress also passed significant reforms to ensure our nation's soldiers can access the support and justice they need to heal and thrive in the wake of sexual violence.

Moving forward in the remainder of the 117th Congress and beyond, we reaffirm our commitment to our partnership. These issues are too serious, and the stakes are too high, to let ourselves be divided by partisan politics as we confront sexual violence.

Each bill in this agenda has been introduced by a Task Force member and has support from colleagues on both sides of the aisle. We look forward to hearing from you about your priorities, and together we'll strive towards a world free from sexual violence.

SINCERELY,

CO-CHAIRS OF THE BIPARTISAN TASK FORCE TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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Protecting Children

H.R. 1198 END CHILD EXPLOITATION ACT

- **Extends the period of time that technology companies are required to preserve information about child sexual abuse images they report to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) from 90 to 180 days. This will allow more time for under-resourced law enforcement to conduct the necessary investigative processes.**
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Anthony Gonzalez (R-OH), Annie Kuster (D-NH)*

Campus Sexual Violence

H.R 4898, HOLD ACCOUNTABLE AND LEND TRANSPARENCY (HALT) CAMPUS SEXUAL VIOLENCE ACT

- **Strengthens prevention efforts and the enforcement of laws to eradicate the epidemic of campus sexual violence and hold perpetrators accountable.**
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Jackie Speier (D-CA), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)*

Military Sexual Trauma

H.R. 2146, MILITARY FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION ACT

- Improves the Defense Department's Family Advocacy Program by ensuring the program is properly resourced, improving coordination of the program on military installations, and increasing education about the program for servicemembers and families in order to quickly intervene and prevent domestic violence and abuse in the military.
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Dave Joyce (R-OH), Annie Kuster (D-NH)*

H.R. 7560, SEXUAL HARASSMENT INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTION ACT

- Transfers prosecutorial responsibility outside of the chain of command to military attorneys with significant trial experience, ensuring that professional military prosecutors who are independent are making crucial decisions on whether to pursue trial for major crimes committed within the armed services.
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Jackie Speier (D-CA), Markwayne Mullin (R-OK)*

Military Sexual Trauma

H.R. 4452, MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA RETIREMENT EQUITY ACT

- **Enables all military retirees with disabilities caused by military sexual trauma (MST) to receive their full retirement and disability compensation.**
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Jenniffer González-Colón (R-PR), Sara Jacobs (D-CA)*

Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice

H.R. 2172, CLOSING THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONSENT LOOPHOLE ACT -- ENACTED INTO LAW ON MARCH 15, 2022

- **Makes it a criminal offense for a federal law enforcement officer to engage in a sexual act with anyone in custody or while exercising their authority under color of law, regardless of consent. This would include federal agents, probation officers, judges, and prosecutors.**
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Jackie Speier (D-CA), Dave Joyce (R-OH)*

H.R. 1527, HOMELAND SECURITY INVESTIGATIONS VICTIMS ASSISTANCE ACT

- **Codifies the Victim Assistance Program within the Department of Homeland Security to protect the rights of victims, and ensure victim assistance specialists are better trained and more accessible to victims and survivors.**
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Ann Wagner (R-MO), Henry Cuellar (D-TX)*

Law Enforcement & Criminal Justice

H.R. 2922, ELDER ABUSE PROTECTION ACT

- **Directs the Attorney General to establish the Elder Justice Initiative within the Department of Justice Criminal Division. The Elder Justice Initiative would be responsible for coordinating criminal enforcement and public engagement efforts to combat elder abuse, neglect, and financial fraud and scams that target elders.**
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Sylvia Garcia (D-TX), Victoria Spartz (R-IN)*

Resources and Support for Survivors

H.R. 2739, SECURING URGENT RESOURCES VITAL TO INDIAN VICTIM EMPOWERMENT (SURVIVE) ACT

- Provides legal, medical, and counseling resources to women and children in tribal communities who are survivors of domestic violence by creating a tribal grant program within the Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime and requiring a 5 percent allocation from the Crime Victims Fund (CVF) to be provided to Indian tribes.
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Tom O'Halleran (D-AZ), Tom Cole (R-OK)*

H.R. 7132, SAFE CONNECTIONS ACT

- Allows survivors and their dependents to separate a mobile phone line from any shared plan involving an abuser, without penalties. It also requires the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to evaluate how to help survivors who separate from a shared plan enroll in the Lifeline Program for up to six-months as they regain financial stability.
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Annie Kuster (D-NH), Tim Walberg (R-MI)*

Resources and Support for Survivors

H.R. 4159, COURTROOM DOGS ACT

- Grants the Department of Justice (DOJ) the authority to develop best practice guidelines for the use of support dogs in federal courts. The use of support dogs in the courtroom as a mechanism for calming and supporting individuals involved in court proceedings has expanded rapidly in the United States.
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Mary Gay Scanlon (D-PA), Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA)*

H.R. 2145, SURVIVORS' ACCESS TO SUPPORTIVE CARE ACT

- Develops national standards of care for survivors of sexual assault, strengthens the sexual assault examiner workforce, and expands access to sexual assault examination services—including to rural and Tribal communities, and for higher education students.
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), John Katko (R-NY)*

Resources and Support for Survivors

H.R. 4445, ENDING FORCED ARBITRATION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT & SEXUAL HARASSMENT ACT -- ENACTED INTO LAW ON MARCH 3, 2022

- Invalidates forced arbitration clauses in employment and consumer contracts that prevent sexual assault and sexual harassment survivors from seeking justice and public accountability under the laws meant to protect them.
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Cheri Bustos (D-IL), Morgan Griffith (R-VA)*

Human Trafficking

H.R. 808, END BANKING FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKERS ACT

- **Directs federal banking regulators to work with law enforcement and financial institutions to combat the use of the financial system for human trafficking. The bill would also increase collaboration between the private sector, law enforcement, and experts in financial crimes.**
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Bill Keating (D-MA)*

Improved Data Collection & Law Enforcement Training

H.R. 763, CHILD AND ANIMAL ABUSE DETECTION AND REPORTING ACT

- Requires the Department of Health and Human Services to compile and analyze cases where child and animal abuse co-occur in order to better identify and prevent these horrific crimes.
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Annie Kuster (D-NH), John Katko (R-NY)*

H.R. 1034, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY GUIDANCE ACT

- Directs the Attorney General to work in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services and relevant law enforcement and domestic violence stakeholders to issue guidance outlining best practices and resources to state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies, with a unique focus on addressing domestic violence effectively while limiting potential exposure to COVID-19.
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Jennifer Wexton (D-VA), Dave Joyce (R-OH)*

H.R. 8659 ANIMAL VIOLENCE EXPOSES REAL THREAT OF (AVERT) FUTURE VIOLENCE ACT

- **Commissions a study within the Department of Justice to assess the link between animal cruelty and violence against humans, and specifically highlights the correlation to sexual violence. It also establishes a grant program to support mental health experts, law enforcement, and other eligible organizations in their efforts to stop animal cruelty and rehabilitate offenders by strengthening detection strategies and early intervention/diversion resources.**
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Katherine Clark (D-MA), Dave Joyce (R-OH)*

Sexual Assault Kit Backlog

H.R. 6735 SUPPORTING ACCESS TO NURSE EXAMS ACT

- Amends the Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SANE) grants program to allow grants to be used to establish qualified regional SANE training programs, provide full and part-time salaries for SANE nurses, including pediatric SANEs, and increase access to SANEs by otherwise providing training, education, or technical assistance relating to the collection, preservation, analysis, and use of DNA samples and DNA evidence collected by SANEs.
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Dave Joyce (R-OH), Deborah Ross (D-NC)*

H.R. 4978, SURVIVORS' BILL OF RIGHTS IN THE STATES ACT

- Encourages states to ensure that survivors have, at minimum, the rights guaranteed to survivors under federal law. States that provide these rights would be eligible for 10 percent of their STOP formula grant funding, the largest Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grant.
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Jackie Speier (D-CA), Kelly Armstrong (R-ND)*

Housing Security for Survivors

PREVENTING SEXUAL HARRASSMENT IN PUBLIC HOUSING ACT

- **Requires the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to report sexual harassment separately from other types of sex-based discrimination. This bill would also require the creation of an interagency initiative between HUD and DOJ to address the crisis related to this issue.**
 - *Introduced as an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act by: Reps. John Katko (R-NY), Annie Kuster (D-NH)*

General Awareness

H. RES. 358

- A resolution recognizing and supporting the goals and ideals of National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.
 - *Introduced by: Reps. Jackie Speier (D-CA), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)*

Our Members

117TH CONGRESS

DEMOCRATS:

Ann McLane Kuster

Jackie Speier

Carolyn Maloney

Pramila Jayapal

Lois Frankel

Katherine Clark

Gwen Moore

Debbie W. Schultz

Sean Patrick Maloney

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Brendan Boyle

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Josh Gottheimer

Tom O'Halleran

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Julia Brownley

Mikie Sherrill

Ayanna Pressley

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Chris Pappas

Tom Malinowski

William Keating

Sylvia Garcia

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Jennifer Wexton

Frank Mrvan

Mary Gay Scanlon

Lisa Blunt Rochester

REPUBLICANS:

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John Katko

Jackie Walorski**

Tom Reed

Don Bacon

Mike Turner

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Rodney Davis

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Jennifer G. Colon

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Cathy McMorris

Rodgers

Darin LaHood

Michael Burgess

Troy Balderson

Brian Mast

Tom Cole

Pete Stauber

Fred Upton

Anthony Gonzalez

Bill Huizenga

Bold indicates that Member is a co-chair of the Task Force.

***Congresswoman Jackie Walorski was an original member of the Task Force and remained a steadfast advocate and legislative champion until her tragic death in 2022.*