

FACT SHEET: RENEWING THE CALL TO END RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Today, The White House Council on Women and Girls is releasing *Rape and Sexual Assault: A Renewed Call to Action*. (link) The Administration has been working aggressively to combat rape and sexual assault, but today's report is not the culmination of those efforts. It is a call for further action.

Protecting Students from Sexual Assault

The President believes that the prevalence of rape and sexual assault in our Nation's schools is both deeply troubling and a call to action. When 1 in 5 young women is sexually assaulted while in college, we must do more.

Today, the Administration is establishing the White House Task Force on Protecting Students from Sexual Assault. To make our campuses safer, the Task Force will provide schools with best practices for preventing sexual assault, improve transparency of the federal government's enforcement activities, and coordinate among federal agencies to hold schools accountable for confronting sexual assault.

The Task Force builds on strong steps the Administration has already taken to combat rape and sexual assault on campus. In 2011, Vice President Biden and Secretary Duncan announced first-of-its kind guidance to ensure that educational institutions fully understand their obligations under Title IX to respond to and prevent sexual assault.

As a result of this guidance, students have a better understanding of their schools' responsibilities, and Title IX investigations are on the rise. The Administration is committed to enforcing Title IX and other laws that address sexual assault at colleges and universities.

Improving the Criminal Justice Response

Despite the prevalence of rape and sexual assault, many offenders are neither arrested nor prosecuted.

Last year, the President signed the third reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act—the backbone of our nation's response to violence against women and authored by then-Senator Biden—which commits unprecedented resources to improving the criminal justice system's response. VAWA includes set-aside funding to scale up multidisciplinary sexual assault teams and other promising practices that have a proven track record of winning convictions.

Science has shown that the trauma that often accompanies sexual assault can leave a victim's memory impaired and her account can seem fragmented. But with new trauma-informed interviewing techniques, law enforcement and other first responders can interact more effectively with victims. The Administration is committed to further developing these practices and disseminating these findings to local communities.

Changing Social Norms that Support Violence

Violence prevention can't just focus on perpetrators and survivors. It has to involve everyone and engage men as allies in preventing sexual assault. Most men are not perpetrators, and social

norms research tells us that men often overestimate other men's acceptance of abusive behavior towards women. This can lead perpetrators to think their actions are acceptable- which, of course perpetuates the violence.

We can break this cycle by engaging men in speaking out against sexual rape and sexual assault. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Justice are funding programs to engage men as influencers of other men to stop violence against women and girls. The Administration is committed to using the bully pulpit to spread this message.

Serving as a Model Employer

To lead by example, in April 2012, President Obama directed federal agencies to develop policies to address domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking in the federal workforce. The Administration will continue to model how employers can train supervisors and employees, assist victims, and promote no- tolerance attitudes towards sexual assault.

Building on Our Track Record

Today's announcements build on the Administration's strong record of taking action to prevent violence against women. Through unprecedented coordination across the federal government we have:

- Adopted a series of Executive Actions to address sexual assault in the military – including measures to improve command accountability, expand victims' rights within the military justice system, increase training across the ranks, provide new support for victims, and enhance awareness at the military service academies. In December 2013, President Obama directed DOD to conduct a full-scale review of progress by December 2014.
- Successfully called on Congress to double funding for VAWA's Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP), the first funding stream to focus specifically on rape and sexual assault. SASP provides funding for crisis intervention, counseling, hotlines, and legal advocacy.
- Launched the **1 is 2 Many Campaign** to focus on teen dating violence and sexual assault. Among other initiatives, the Campaign developed best-practices resources on teen dating violence for schools; convened a series of forums to enlist men in the effort to end violence against women; and inspired the creation of two award-winning mobile apps allow teens and young adults to connect with their friends and stay safe.
- Secured funding for the National Dating Abuse Helpline to expand to digital services, which let teens and young adults reach out for help in a way that they are most comfortable – via text messaging and online.
- Modernized the definition of "rape" in the Uniform Crime Report for nationwide data collection, ensuring a more accurate accounting of this crime.

- Developed a national, best-practices protocol for conducting sexual assault forensic examinations.
- Implemented a series of major initiatives to protect American Indian and Alaska Native Women, including more resources for tribal law enforcement, court systems, and victim services; new penalties for spouse and intimate-partner violence; and expanded jurisdiction to allow both federal and tribal authorities to hold domestic abusers, whether Indian or non-Indian, accountable.
- Developed an action agenda for federal agencies to address the link between violence against women and HIV/AIDS.
- Promulgated new guidelines requiring prisons and other detention facilities to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual assault.