



National Alliance to  
End Sexual Violence

## **NAESV Statement on Campus Sexual Assault Legislation July 30, 2014**

[The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence](#) (NAESV) is the voice in Washington for the 56 state and territorial sexual assault coalitions and 1300 rape crisis centers working to end sexual violence and support survivors. Every day, rape crisis centers see the devastating impact of campus sexual assault.

NAESV applauds efforts by members of Congress to seriously address the entrenched problem of sexual violence on campus in a bipartisan manner and incorporate feedback from advocates in crafting this legislation. The Bipartisan Campus Accountability and Safety Act is a good first step to support survivors' access to confidential advocates, encourage partnerships with local rape crisis centers and state sexual assault coalitions, and increase transparency and accountability.

Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO) held a series of excellent roundtables this summer to more closely analyze the problem of sexual assault on campus and look for long-lasting solutions. We especially commend her leadership along with Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), Charles Grassley (R-IA), Dean Heller (R-NV), Mark Warner (D-VA), and Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Representative Jackie Speier (D-CA) in the House of Representatives.

We are especially grateful that legislation introduced today highlights the need for partnerships with sexual assault coalitions and community-based rape crisis centers. Institutions of higher education have a prime opportunity to make significant and lasting change by integrating comprehensive sexual assault services and prevention messages through all aspects of campus life. State sexual assault coalitions and community-based rape crisis centers are experts in sexual violence with decades of experience providing sexual assault services, training and prevention. They stand ready to partner with institutions and develop Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to improve the response to survivors and prevent future sexual violence. MOUs should include fees for services rendered or a mutually agreed upon plan to fund activities through appropriations or other funding processes.

It is imperative that survivors' confidentiality is guarded, and we commend language in this legislation to do so. If a survivor chooses not to report the assault, this choice must be honored and her or his anonymity protected. The cornerstone of rape crisis advocacy is empowering survivors to regain control by making their own decisions following sexual assault.

NAESV agrees that climate surveys will be a critical tool to better understand and uncover the problem of sexual violence on campus. No institution should be incentivized to further hide areas where improvement is needed. At the same time, climate surveys must be developed in a spirit of mutual

collaboration and teamwork, and just as survey development will require collaboration, so too will the process of interpreting results and developing action steps.

NAESV concurs with the sponsors of the bipartisan legislation that sexual assault training for staff is critical. Employees who are responsible for responding to sexual assault must understand trauma-informed services and investigation. Additionally, we welcome provisions ensuring uniform campus disciplinary processes and providing amnesty for students from underage drinking violations if they come forward with reports of sexual violence.

We are grateful for the sponsors' commitment to continue to work with advocates to refine legislative language and strengthen the Bipartisan Campus Accountability and Safety Act. We look forward to working with members of Congress toward the passage of legislation that is victim-centered with a focus on prevention to best assist campuses in addressing this systemic problem.

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**HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?**

Contact Monika Johnson Hostler, President, at (919) 272-7462 or [monika@nccasa.org](mailto:monika@nccasa.org).

*The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence is the voice in Washington for state coalitions and local programs working to end sexual violence and support survivors.*