

# The Advocate

Renewal House, Spring 2018

Beyond #MeToo

## Where does the movement to end sexual violence go from here?

By Megan Thomas, National Sexual Violence Resource Center

Five letters echoed across social media—it would be hard to miss them. On October 15, 2017, person after person after person posted the message #MeToo, sharing with the world that they had experienced sexual assault or harassment. #MeToo moved from a hashtag to a phenomenon to a movement, empowering many and raising that all-too-important question: Where do we go from here?

### Where it Started

MeToo first appeared not on the internet, but as a campaign created by activist Tarana Burke. Burke founded Just BE Inc., a nonprofit that helps survivors of sexual assault and harassment in 2007, and along with it, she created the MeToo movement. Burke's intention with the movement was to center the experiences and needs of women and girls of color who were survivors of sexual assault.

But one recent event has made the movement visible to a wider audience. Following the sexual harassment and assault allegations against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, which led to his subsequent ousting, the topic of sexual harassment gained traction in public discourse. Actress Alyssa Milano wrote a post on Twitter reading: "Me too. Suggested by a friend: 'If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote 'me too.' as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem.'"

And people did.

According to twitter, the hashtag was tweeted nearly a million times in just 48 hours. The hashtag also jumped from Twitter to Facebook, where it was shared more than 12 million times in 24 hours, according to the Associated Press.

### Impact of #MeToo

Hashtags come and go on social media, and #MeToo is not the first time that social justice issues have taken center stage. For example, a similar hashtag, #YesAllWomen, trended in 2014, creating a place for women to share instances of harassment, abuse, and misogyny they'd experienced. What's different about #MeToo is its longevity and the impact it's had on the wider cultural conversation about sexual violence.

For starters, sexual harassment and assault are now being widely discussed. Turn on any news station in the hashtag's first few days, and #MeToo was bound to be a hot topic. Even months later, *TIME Magazine* recognized the "Silence Breakers" - including Burke, Milano, and many other survivors and activists—as the 2017 Person of the Year. Sexual violence thrives in silence, and one of the first steps to preventing sexual violence is talking about it.

The popularity and widespread nature of #MeToo have also helped many survivors feel less alone. People who may have never shared their stories before have come forward online and in person, and in doing so, have found a community of other survivors. For example, NSVRC's Facebook page alone saw an increase of over 1,000 new likes after the popularization of

#MeToo. This speaks to the growing community of people who want to share their personal experiences and look for ways to make a difference.

Another impact that sets #MeToo apart is that some people who commit sexual offenses are starting to be held accountable. We have seen various high-profile figures, from actors to politicians, lose their jobs or resign after people have come forward with allegations against them. While this is heartening progress, it has not yet extended to all situations. Many survivors still do not feel empowered to break their silence, especially people who work in low-wage positions, women of color, or young people—who are all at disproportionate risk for sexual violence. So as huge as this moment is, many survivors still feel silenced or shamed if they do speak up.

#MeToo has also led men to get involved in the prevention conversation. Various male allies have written or spoken on men's roles in preventing sexual assault and harassment. One of the popular themes is that it's not enough for men to just not commit sexual offenses—men should also hold their friends and those around them accountable. This focus on bystander intervention has been brought up largely in relation to workplace sexual harassment, asking men to call out inappropriate and abusive behavior when they see it.

## April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

In the United States, April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). The goal of SAAM is to raise public awareness about sexual violence and to educate communities on how to prevent it.

This year, SAAM is celebrating its 17th anniversary with the theme “Embrace Your Voice” to inform individuals on how they can use their words to promote safety, respect, and equality to stop sexual violence before it happens.

More specifically, individuals can embrace their voices to show their support for survivors, stand up to victim blaming, shut down rape jokes, correct harmful misconceptions, promote everyday consent, and practice healthy communications with children.

Our words shape the world around us. Whether you are speaking out against locker room talk or helping someone better understand these issues, your voice is powerful and necessary in this conversation. We know that one month isn't enough to solve the serious and widespread issue of sexual violence. However, the attention April generates is an opportunity to energize and expand prevention efforts throughout the year.

### **How You Talk About Sexual Violence Matters.**

The things you say every day send a message about your beliefs and values. When you stand up for survivors of sexual violence, you send a powerful message that you believe and support them.

### **What Influences Your Beliefs About Sexual Violence?**

Your ideas about sexual violence—including portrayals of what a victim looks like, who perpetrates sexual assault, and more—might be informed by TV shows, movies, news reporting, and other forms of media. The reality is that sexual assault in the media is often inaccurate and doesn't tell the whole story.

### **How your words affect others**

If someone in your life is considering sharing something personal with you, they are likely listening to your opinions or attitudes for clues on how you will respond.

A comment or joke based on assumptions or stereotypes might not seem like a big deal, but this could make someone feel unsafe about sharing personal or painful things with you. For example: “I could never tell her what happened to me. She said if victims of sexual assault don't go to the police, then it wasn't serious.”

### **What can you do?**

Don't wait for a critical moment to say the right things. The words you choose every day communicate your values.

When you hear comments that blame victims or make light of sexual violence, speak up so others know you don't agree. Even if you don't have a perfect response, this shows you do not believe in stereotypes, you believe survivors, and you're a safe person to talk to. For example: “That commercial made me uncomfortable. I don't know exactly why, but I think everyone should be treated with respect.” or, “I don't think that's true—I believe people when they say that someone has hurt them.”

### **You can be an agent of change**

Our words shape the world around us. Whether you are showing your support for a survivor or helping someone better understand these issues, your voice is powerful and necessary in this conversation.

## National Crime Victims' Rights Week - April 8—14, 2018

Taken from the 2018 NCVRW Resource Guide

National Crime Victims' Rights Week is April 8—14, 2018. This year's theme, Expand the Circle: Reach All Victims, emphasizes the importance of inclusion in victim services and the necessity of expanding the movement to include those who may not typically be considered providers.

Employers, schools and universities, houses of worship, doctors, nurses, researchers, and others are making important contributions to the victims' field,

and we need to continue to recognize them as stakeholders in our efforts.

When we build relationships across disciplines and form strategic partnerships, we move toward a future in which every victim can disclose their victimization to someone they trust. These collaborations also ensure that victims are connected to accessible, trauma-informed, research-based, culturally competent services. We will

continue to increase outreach to victims who are underserved and will work with service providers in these communities to break down barriers for victims.

We know that victims are much more likely to receive the services and support they need when communities are working together and are invested in their recovery and well-being.

## Upcoming Events

### National Volunteer Week - April 15—25, 2018

Thank you to all the volunteers who give their time to provide support to the organizations they choose to serve!

### Denim Day is Wednesday, April 25, 2018

Join us as we celebrate Denim Day and the fact that clothing is NEVER AN EXCUSE for sexual assault.

Why denim? Whether a person's jeans are baggy, tight, skinny, full of holes, short, long, bootcut, jeggings, or leggings, there is NEVER AN EXCUSE for sexual assault.

#### The History of Denim Day

Denim Day grew out of a 1998 Italian Supreme Court decision that overturned a rape conviction because the victim wore tight jeans.

An 18-year old girl is picked up by her married, 45-year old driving instructor for her very first lesson. He takes her to an isolated road, pulls her out of the car, wrestles her out of one leg of her jeans, and forcefully rapes her. Threatened with death if she tells anyone, he makes her drive the car home. Later that night she tells her

parents, and they help and support her to press charges. The perpetrator gets arrested and is prosecuted. He is convicted of rape and sentenced to jail.

He appeals the sentence. The case makes it all the way to the Italian Supreme Court. Within a matter of days the case against the driving instructor is overturned, dismissed, and the perpetrator released. In a statement by the Chief Judge, he argued, "because the victim wore very, very tight jeans, she had to help him remove them, and by removing the jeans it was no longer rape but consensual sex."

Enraged by the verdict, within a matter of hours, the women in the Italian Parliament launched into immediate action and protested by wearing jeans to work. This call to action motivated and emboldened the California Senate and Assembly to do the same.

People all over the world were outraged, and wearing jeans became an international symbol of protest against erroneous and destructive attitudes and myths surrounding sexual assault.

Denim Day is a symbolic gesture of how a community can help change perceptions about violence against women, men and children.

We are asking community members, elected officials, business people and students to make a statement by wearing jeans on April 25th as a visible means of protest against misconceptions that surround sexual assault.

You may even consider charging your employees each \$5 to wear denim on Wednesday, April 25th as a donation to Renewal House to support victim services.

### Music and Arts Festival - Sunday, June 10, 2018

This year's Music and Arts Festival will be held from Noon—6pm on Sunday, June 10th at Bella Brooke Vineyard, 2989 County Route 6, Hammond.

The cost is \$5 per person, 12 and under are free. This is a family

event, rain or shine. Bring your lawn chair and enjoy food, entertainment and the arts and crafts available for purchase.

If you are interested in being a part of this event, please contact us at [renewalhouse@verizon.net](mailto:renewalhouse@verizon.net).

To learn more about Bella-Brooke Vineyard, visit their website at [www.bella-brookevineyard.com](http://www.bella-brookevineyard.com).

**Save the date** and watch for more information.

### Stop the Violence Golf Tournament - Saturday, September 29, 2018

In preparation for Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October, Renewal House will host a Stop the Violence Golf Tournament on Saturday, September 29th at St. Lawrence University's Oliver D. Appleton Golf Course, 100 East Main Street in Canton.

The format is Captain and Crew with a shotgun start at 1pm.

The cost is \$400 per team. Member price is \$80 per person. Your cost includes green fee, cart, and dinner after the tournament.

Tournament competitions may include:

Putting contest

Hole in One wins \$500

Longest drive male and female

Closest to the pin

50/50 drawing

Help STOP THE VIOLENCE by participating in our tournament this year.

A registration form will be on our website at [slvrenewalhouse.org](http://slvrenewalhouse.org).

Please register by September 22nd.

### Services Offered at Renewal House

**Renewal House** provides a variety of services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in St. Lawrence County.

All services are free and confidential. Services include:

**24-hour Crisis Hotline:** Staff and volunteers are available 24 hours a day by calling **315-379-9845**.

Regular office hours are 8 am - 5 pm, Monday through Friday. If it is not an emergency and you would like **to leave a message, call 315-379-9878**. We will get back to you as soon as possible.

**Individual Counseling/Emotional Support:** Short-term individual counseling in a non-judgmental atmosphere that acknowledges a person's ability and right to make choices. Help is available to consider options and plan for safety. Home visits are provided if needed.

**Support Group:** A facilitated self-help group for victims and survivors of domestic violence providing mutual support and understanding from others who have been abused and who share something in common. It has helped many victims feel less isolated, get useful information, and develop a safety plan. Transportation is provided if

needed.

**Children's Program:** Recreational/Support group to help children understand what abuse is and to give them a chance to talk about their feelings. Children are reassured that the abuse is not their fault. Individual counseling is also provided.

**Safe Housing:** 24-hour intake for emergency, temporary shelter for domestic violence victims.

**Advocacy:** Assistance in obtaining orders of protection, pressing criminal charges, and working with law enforcement. We also help in obtaining emergency assistance from Department of Social Services, Office of Victim Services and other community programs.

**Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners:** Specially trained medical professionals providing compassionate, knowledgeable assistance to a victim of a sexual assault.

**Community Education and Outreach:** Presentations are available for any public or private group, school, business, or agency.

**Campus Advocacy**  
Our Campus Advocate provides direct service, trainings, and

presentations for all colleges in St. Lawrence County. We are currently at four colleges that are generously sharing their space with us:

Clarkson University, Tuesdays, 8:30—4:30pm, Education Resource Center (ERC), Student Health and Counseling Center (SHAC), Suite 1300

SUNY Potsdam, Wednesdays, 9—5pm, Van Housen Ext, Room 390

SUNY Canton, Thursdays, 9—5pm, Payson Hall, Room 207

St. Lawrence University, Fridays, 9—5pm, Bewkes Science Hall, Room 323

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Although we do not have a dedicated space, we are currently providing training to students, staff and faculty. All services are available upon request.

*Renewal House prohibits the discrimination or harassment of any person based on race, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, religion and national origin.*

The Purple Purse Challenge raised \$6,348.45. Thank you for your support!

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Renewal House recognizes the businesses, organizations, and community members who generously support the adults and children who seek services at Renewal House by donating money, items or time. The names listed on this report are from donations received since our last newsletter.

### What's next?

Naturally, the question on everyone's mind is: What comes next? How can we keep this momentum alive and use the attention and energy generated by #MeToo to drive greater culture change?

#### Individuals

As with any change, culture change around sexual violence starts at the individual level. Raliance, a collaborative initiative dedicated to ending sexual violence in one generation, offers several actions anyone can take to make a change. They recommend individuals examine their own actions, thinking about times they may have overlooked or ignored problematic behaviors—or even behaved in problematic ways themselves. Individuals can also speak up whenever they hear sexist comments or see inappropriate behaviors—whether that's on public transportation, at work, or among friends.

#### Relationships

Change doesn't just happen at the individual level, though. People can create change in their relationships as well - relationships with their friends, family, intimate partners, co-workers, and so on. One of the biggest ways to do this is by holding people around you accountable. Accountability means something different to everyone, but mostly it's about setting expectations and following through on consequences.

Teaching children is also a vital way to make change at the relationship level. Raising or mentoring children about respect, boundaries, and bodily autonomy sets them on a positive path. Information about consent and respect can be imbued into almost any conversation, and the current cultural climate around sexual violence presents tons of teachable moments. Using your interactions with children to provide guidance is a key way to make lasting change.

#### Communities

Getting involved in the broader community can also spur culture change. People can rally their communities, whether that's by holding events or organizing public awareness campaigns. Another way to make change is by donating or volunteering at sexual violence prevention organizations that are working at the community level through education and prevention programs.

Workplaces are also communities—and ideal places to implement change. Employees can read up on their workplace's sexual harassment policies and work with their co-workers, supervisors, or Human Resources department to strengthen or develop them. They can build a culture of respect and transparency that makes people feel safe at work - and makes it easy to report if they feel unsafe.

#### Society

And of course, we can change society as a whole. These changes can come through policies—in the workplace and through laws. They also happen when we dedicate time, resources, and attention to solving the problem of sexual violence, which can be achieved through advocating for continued funding of prevention work.

As mentioned earlier, the #MeToo movement is not perfect. It was conceived as a movement of solidarity and support for survivors of color, and attention has now shifted to predominantly middle-to-upper-class white women. In order to make a change on the societal level, we must focus attention on those who are not high-profile figures or in glamorous industries, as well as people of color and people who identify as LGBTQ. In other words, the movement to end sexual violence must focus on the places where it intersects with other movements to end oppressions such as racism, classism, homophobia, ableism, and more.

Burke has said that moving forward, the names of specific offenders don't matter as much as systemic change. But this kind of systemic change cannot be sustained unless the movement as a whole promises to follow through and hold themselves accountable.

What does accountability look like? During a Twitter chat with the DC Rape Crisis Center, Burke explained how the anti-rape movement can be more accountable to racial justice: "Intentionality and strategy. We get a lot of 'commitment' to racial justice but not a lot of action. White advocates have to go to the next step and strategize about how to actionize that commitment...They also need to understand that intersectionality is not a gift. It's earned. One of the ways is through accountability. It's not about shaming folks or dredging up the past, it's about truth and reconciliation. No more or less than what other folks want."

### #MeTooK12: One Daughter's Trauma, and a Family's Quest to Prevent School-Related Sexual Violence

by Mark Keierleber, January 8, 2018

Esther Warkov and Joel Levin watched their daughter's life crumble before their eyes. In 2012, in the middle of her sophomore year at Seattle's Garfield High School, the young woman left home for an overnight ecology field trip on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. In a cabin near the edge of Olympic National Park, they say, a fellow classmate raped their daughter. When she returned home, she wasn't the same. "Her entire educational trajectory that she had been working on for years was completely destroyed," Warkov told The 74. "She was unable to graduate high school, she had to

## #MeTooK12

go into residential treatment for therapy for trauma where there was a very minimal educational component. Basically, we saw an entire life destroyed.”

In light of the growing #MeToo movement that’s spurred an explosion of sexual misconduct allegations against high-profile men in Hollywood and beyond — beginning with film producer Harvey Weinstein — the family is looking to push the issue closer to home for American parents. Charged by their battle against Seattle school officials following their daughter’s alleged attack, Warkov and Levin are launching a new campaign, #MeTooK12, to highlight the prevalence of sexual violence among K-12 students. For several years, Warkov and Levin have operated a small nonprofit, Stop Sexual Assault in Schools, which offers resources for families in contentious battles with schools following sexual violence and harassment allegations.

Beginning with limited knowledge of their rights under Title IX, the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education, the family found themselves in a years-long crusade to secure justice for their daughter. The day after the incident, she was transported to a hospital and treated for sexual assault, though the alleged perpetrator was never charged with a crime. Seattle school officials, the family alleged, failed for months to launch an independent investigation, did not provide services for post-traumatic stress disorder that stemmed from the attack, and launched combative and untruthful tactics to protect their public image.

“[The district] didn’t say, ‘We’re going to find out what happened and try to help your daughter,’ ” Levin said. “It was just almost adversarial from the beginning, and it was obvious the district didn’t know how to handle a situation like this.”

Though Seattle Public Schools officials didn’t respond to a request

for comment, in a statement, the district denied liability for the incident, noting that law enforcement agencies determined there was “inconclusive evidence of a crime.”

Seattle officials reached a \$700,000 settlement with Warkov and Levin in 2014. The settlement, the district noted, required the family to drop complaints against the district including one pending in the Education Department’s Office for Civil Rights. The incident prompted the district to provide additional training to educators, create a new Title IX website outlining district resources and procedures, and improve field trip procedures.

Their daughter’s case is part of a larger problem, advocates say, in which the severity and prevalence of sexual violence and harassment in the K-12 setting are under-reported and inadequately investigated.

Officially launched January 9 in partnership with the nonprofit National Women’s Law Center, the #MeTooK12 campaign encourages survivors to share their stories on social media. Personal accounts have already begun to flood Twitter:

✓@TaranaBurke

The ‘me too.’ MVMT started with Black and Brown girls in the south and I know first hand how students face and perpetrate sexual assault and harassment in schools. #MeTooK12 demands that we all pay attention. Thank you @SSAIS. On #MeTooK12.

For Warkov and Levin, however, a viral hashtag is just the beginning. “That would be one component of it, but if it only stopped at that, it probably wouldn’t be enough,” Warkov said. “We’re going to have to demand action, we’re going to have to compel schools to fulfill their obligations to uphold students’ civil rights. It’s not enough to just talk about what happened. We have to have a

course of action that corrects the problem.”

### A prevalent problem

Years before a reckoning on sexual harassment swept the stage at the Golden Globes, tough conversations about abuse stormed college campuses nationwide, spawning major victories — and setbacks — for survivors and activists. They were handed a victory in 2011 when the Obama administration released a “Dear Colleague” letter urging colleges and K-12 schools to better investigate accusations, outlining the evidentiary standard school officials should use for sexual violence cases under Title IX.

Although that document spawned significant attention for student victims on college campuses, it also received significant push-back from critics who say the former administration stripped due-process rights from students accused of sexual harassment and assault.

Children in K-12 schools,

however, have largely been excluded from those conversations, even as activists say younger students often face the biggest hurdles.

The prevalence of child sexual violence is difficult to pinpoint because victims often do not report the abuse, though studies have shown that about 20 percent of girls and over 5 percent of boys are victims of sexual abuse.

A report by the American Association of University Women, released in October 2017, analyzed federal education data and found that 79 percent of public schools reported zero incidents of sexual harassment in 2013–14 — a rate the advocacy group said is “statistically impossible” and contradictory to their own student surveys. Digging into the data, the group found that the rates at which

schools reported incidents varied widely between states.

Following July meetings at the Education Department to hear from various stakeholders, including those at the K-12 level, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos rescinded the Obama-era guidance in September, following a speech in which she said Obama's approach had failed survivors, victims, and school administrators. DeVos aims to propose updated Title IX guidance in March, Politico reports.

In recent years, the Office for Civil Rights — which investigates schools' compliance with federal civil rights laws — has observed a sharp uptick in Title IX sexual violence complaints against K-12 schools and colleges.

As of last week, the Office for Civil Rights has 156 pending Title IX sexual violence investigations against 134 K-12 school districts, according to a spreadsheet the Education Department provided to The 74. Among them is an investigation against Gwinnett County Public Schools in Georgia, where a student says she was punished for reporting an on-campus attack. Additionally, the Office for Civil Rights is investigating 339 cases at 245 postsecondary institutions, according to a second spreadsheet.

### Moving the needle

Office for Civil Rights investigations offer only a snippet of school incidents in which students face discrimination or attacks. In May 2017, the Associated Press released a yearlong investigation that uncovered some 17,000 student reports of sexual violence between 2011 and 2015. Although reporters noted that the number is incomplete since incidents are underreported and government data is inconsistent, their findings offer the most

extensive tally to date. "Unfortunately, even filing an OCR complaint is not going to bring much relief because the process just goes on for years and years, so I think ultimately we have to find new strategies to help people address the stonewalling," Warkov said. K-12 complaints pending before the Office for Civil Rights span back as far as 2010.

In December, an investigation by *The Wall Street Journal* found that at least 26 districts across the country agreed in 2017 to pay out \$37 million to settle sexual violence complaints from students and school staff.

Through his family's experiences in Seattle, Levin said, he realized schools won't work to improve policies and procedures without community pressure. Warkov and Levin declined to provide an update on their daughter's well-being, citing privacy concerns.

Beyond the social media campaign, #MeTooK12 aims to target lawmakers in Washington, D.C., calling on Congress to adopt rules to better protect students under Title IX. Though the Obama-era guidance warned districts they could lose federal funds for failure to comply with Title IX, that's never happened.

"One of our themes is connect the dots," Levin said. "Where does workplace sexual harassment start? If you trace it back, a lot of these behaviors are started in elementary and secondary schools. They're practiced there, they're normalized there because the schools don't do anything about it, and so people just think, 'Oh, this is sort of normal behavior.'"

### Gender Bias and False Reports

taken from an End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI) training bulletin, January 11, 2018

EVAWI explores the relationship between gender bias and the designation of false reports in cases of sexual assault and rape.

### The Stakes are High: The Case of "Marie"

First, let's consider the following case, which took place in Lynnwood, Washington. It was meticulously documented in a Pulitzer Prize-winning article written by T. Christian Miller and Ken Armstrong, called *An Unbelievable Story of Rape*.

In August 2008, an intruder entered the house of Marie (not her real name), an 18-year-old woman recently emancipated from foster care and living on her own for the first time. The intruder covered his face with a black scarf, wore gloves, tied Marie's wrists with shoelaces from her own shoes, put her own underpants in her mouth as a gag, held a knife to her throat, raped her and then took photos of her bound and gagged with her learner's permit on her chest. The medical forensic exam identified abrasions on both her wrists, about 2.5 inches each, as well as abrasions to her vagina. Scuff marks on her patio fence were consistent with someone scaling the fence and entering through the sliding glass door, which was unlocked at the time.

Despite the presence of physical and corroborative evidence, the detectives assigned to the case were skeptical and believed Marie's account had inconsistencies suggesting she was lying. For example, Marie initially reported that after unbinding herself she called a friend—but she later reported that she called her friend while still bound with shoelaces. In addition, the detective received a call from one of Marie's previous foster parents who relayed that she was concerned that Marie was seeking attention and possibly made up the story. The foster parents expressed their doubts about

## Sexual Harassment Policy

Marie's report, noting that her behavior was not how she would expect a rape victim to behave. Thereafter, the detectives asked Marie to come to the police station for another interview. According to the detectives' notes, once Marie was in the conference room at the police station they immediately confronted her, telling her there were inconsistencies between her statements and accounts from other witnesses. The detectives noted that based on her answers and body language, it was clear she was lying. The detectives insisted that Marie write a new statement even though she repeatedly stated she believed she had been raped. She initially wrote that she may have dreamt that she was raped, because it seemed real to her, but the detectives refused to accept this, and insisted that she admit to making up the story. Marie conceded and wrote another statement indicating that she made up the story. However, after returning home, she contacted the police department and insisted that she wished to recant her recantation—in other words, she returned to her original report of being raped at knife point by a stranger.

Nonetheless, the detectives ultimately unfounded the case and classified it as a false report. They then forwarded the case to the prosecutor's office and Marie was prosecuted in 2009 for filing a false police report. She accepted a plea deal based on the advice of her public defender. In 2010, the man who raped Marie was identified by detectives from two different police departments in Colorado. These two detectives teamed up when they realized there had been a string of rapes in different communities (and police jurisdictions) with the same modus operandi. Marie was only identified as a victim in this series of sexual assaults after one of the Colorado police detectives

found a picture of her, along with other victims, on the perpetrator's computer. The photo showed Marie on her bed, bound and gagged with her learner's permit on her chest.

In 2011, Marc O'Leary was convicted of 28 counts of rape and other associated felonies, including the attack on Marie. He is now serving a 327 1/2 year prison sentence, the longest allowable in Colorado. What does it mean for the integrity of law enforcement, and the criminal justice system as a whole, when the victim of a violent crime is wrongly accused of making a false report, and then prosecuted for it? This is not just a failure or a mistake, but an abhorrent miscarriage of justice with far-reaching consequences. Because the charges against Marie, for filing a false police report, were widely reported in the media, this only helped to reinforce the stereo-type that women often lie about rape within the criminal justice system.

Unfortunately, Marie's is not the only such case. Another similar case was highlighted by the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee in 2010, in their hearing entitled, *Rape in the United States: The Chronic Failure to Report and Investigate Rape Cases*. At that hearing, Sara Reedy recounted how she was sexually assaulted and robbed while working at a convenience store in Pennsylvania. Joanne Archambault, (Retired, San Diego Police Department) the Founder and Chief Executive Officer for End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI), served as an expert witness in that case.

### NY Senate's Revised Sexual Harassment Policy Drawing Fire

The only female leader of a legislative conference in Albany is tak-

ing issue with the newly revised state Senate anti-sexual harassment policy because it includes a warning to false accusers.

by Chris Carola, Associated Press, Jan. 31, 2018, at 1:35 p.m

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Adding a warning to false accusers in the state Senate's newly revised anti-sexual harassment policy is an example of "the type of intimidation" that has kept harassment victims from coming forward, according to the only female leader of a legislative conference in Albany.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins, leader of the Republican-controlled chamber's Democratic conference, responded to Monday's distribution of the new policy to senators and staff, pointing out that she wasn't included in discussions about the revisions despite her leadership position in the Legislature.

She took particular issue with a new sentence included in the four-page document under the heading investigation procedures: "Reporting a false complaint is a serious act."

"To emphasize the punishment for filing a false report while not emphasizing the seriousness of sexual harassment is exactly the type of intimidation that has silenced so many through the years and encourages perpetrators to attack accusers," said Stewart-Cousins, who represents part of Westchester County.

The revision, first reported Tuesday by The New York Times, updates a 2007 policy.

The distribution of the new policy comes amid sexual harassment allegations a former Senate staffer leveled against Sen. Jeff Klein, of the Bronx, the leader of the chamber's breakaway Democratic faction.

Klein, head of the Independent Democratic Conference, was accused last month by Erica Vladimer of forcibly kissing her outside an Albany bar in 2015. Klein has denied the allegation, which is being investigated by the state's ethics panel.

Klein and seven other IDC members vote with Republicans, giving the GOP the majority in the chamber.

Senate Republican Leader John Flanagan's office says he ordered a review of the chamber's sexual harassment policy months ago, with input sought by some of the chamber's female Republican lawmakers. Adding the sentence containing the warning against false accusers doesn't alter the intent of the provision outlining the disciplinary actions that could be taken against staffers who make false accusations, a Flanagan spokeswoman said.

"It is and always has been wrong to make a false complaint," Maureen Wren said.

Stewart-Cousins said she was "disappointed" she wasn't included in fashioning the policy, which she claimed was "proof" Senate leaders aren't serious about combating sexual harassment.

Vladimer, who now works for New York City, sought out Sen. Liz Krueger, D-Manhattan, for advice before going public with her allegations. Krueger, a longtime supporter of tougher anti-sexual harassment measures, said she has concerns over the new policy and how it was created.

"Given the secretive process through which this policy was amended, I can only assume that the valuable input necessary to ensure effective investigations and protect victims was not sought from critical stakeholders," she said in statement released Wednesday.

Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo has made combating sexual

harassment in the workplace a legislative priority this year as the issue continues to reverberate across the country in the entertainment industry, the media and politics.

### **NYPD supports bill to outlaw cop sex with suspects**

February 26, 2018, nypost.com

NYPD officials on Monday said they support a City Council bill calling on state lawmakers to make it illegal for cops to have sex with suspects in custody. The agency's support comes as two of its former detectives face charges in Brooklyn of allegedly sexually assaulting and raping a 19-year-old while she was in their custody in September. "I think it's egregious that my colleague had to ask to have a resolution passed here because a woman was raped and violated in the custody of NYPD," Council member Debi Rose (D-SI) told top police brass at a public hearing.

I'd like to know if NYPD is supporting the resolution...to include individuals in police custody as being categorically incapable of consenting to sexual conduct with a police officer."

NYPD legislative director Oleg Chernyavsky responded, "Yes." "That has always been longstanding department policy that this is completely unacceptable and wrong," he said. "And the legislation being proposed essentially brings the law into alignment with what our policy has been."

A City Council resolution has no force of law, but council member Mark Treyger (D-Brooklyn) has also introduced legislation to make sexual contact with a suspect in police custody a misdemeanor—the strongest punishment available to city lawmakers. The state Assembly has already passed legislation making it a crime for cops to engage in sex with people in their custody, closing a loophole in the law that already applies to correction and probation officers.

A companion bill was introduced in the Senate earlier this month.

## Renewal House...Serving St. Lawrence County 2017 Stats

	Domestic Violence (DV)	Sexual Assault (SA)	Grand Total
Total individuals served	<b>754</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>972</b>
Adult Females	585	125	710
Adult Males	51	14	65
Gender Non-Conforming	3	0	3
Children/Youth	115	79	194
Safe Housing	78	Average length of stay was 20 days	
Safe Housing Denials	17	Safe dwelling was full, family size too large for bed space available, etc. Other placement options are offered as an alternative to the safe dwelling.	
Hotline Calls	4,453	4,046 during office hours, 407 after office hours.	
Type of Service	Individuals Served	# of times service was provided	
Emotional Support/Counseling	573	3,797	
Phone Counseling	631	4,046	
Group—Women	15	27	
Children	14	18	
Personal Advocacy	431	3,151	
Criminal Justice Support	219	1,278	
Transportation	291	3,823	
Information	596	1,873	
Referral	320	776	
Child Care/Child Recreation	57	216	
Forensic Sexual Assault Exams provided by a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner	37		
Presentations (school-based & community)	6,235	217	
Volunteers	Hours 3,263	Number of Volunteers 17	
Individuals Served by Area (per intake)			

Brasher Falls	22	North Lawrence	11
Brier Hill	5	Norwood	13
Canton	64	Ogdensburg	150
Chase Mills	10	Oswegatchie	3
Colton	6	Parishville	2
Conifer	1	Piercefield	1
DeKalb Junction	9	Pierrepont	1
Edwards	7	Potsdam	105
Fine	3	Raymondville	1
Gouverneur	86	Rensselear Falls	3
Hammond	15	Richville	5
Hannawa Falls	2	Rossie	1
Harrisville	2	Russell	9
Hermon	13	South Colton	1
Heuvelton	7	Star Lake	3
Lisbon	13	Waddington	16
Louisville	2	Winthrop	10
Madrid	10	Out of County	49
Massena	170	Out of State	7
Morristown	4	Out of Country	1
Morley	2	Unknown	95
Nicholville	1		
Norfolk	31		

*Embrace Your Voice*

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**Address service requested**

Renewal House funding sources:

NYS Office of Victim Services

NYS Office of Children and Family Services

NYS Department of Criminal Justice Services

NYS Department of Health

NYS Coalition Against Sexual Assault

St. Lawrence County Department of  
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Legislative Award - Senator Ritchie

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20

Spring 2018 Newsletter

I have enclosed my tax-deductible donation in support of the programs  
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\$250 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_

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I give permission for my name to be listed on the donor  
appreciation report in the next newsletter.

I do **NOT** want my donation to be recognized.

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