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National and Local Legislation: Stay Updated

DCCESV maintains charts tracking proposed and passed legislation of concern to members and stakeholders, including issue areas affecting women, children, sexual assault, and more. For the most recent version of our local and national legislation tracking charts, visit [dccesv.org](https://www.dccesv.org)

Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military

Last year, 20-year-old soldier Vanessa Guillen was killed by a fellow soldier at Fort Hood. Guillen had reported experiencing sexual harassment two times prior to her death, but her supervisors failed to pass her report up the chain of command. This tragedy gained national attention and illuminated longstanding, critical flaws of the military's treatment of sexual assault and harassment.

In response, President Biden ordered an Independent Review Commission (IRC) on Sexual Assault in the Military. The IRC was led by Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III and included twelve experts from relevant external organizations. After consulting with commanders, enlisted service members, and survivors over the 90-day investigatory period, the IRC provided a detailed report that "addresses accountability, climate and culture, prevention, and support and care of victims." It includes 28 core recommendations and 54 sub-recommendations for preventing and responding to sexual assault and harassment in the military.

The full report can be found [here](#). Read President Biden's statement on the results of the report [here](#).

Olympic Gymnast Simone Biles Opens Up About Sexual Abuse Trauma



As the most decorated American gymnast of all time, Simone Biles uses her platform to advocate for survivors of sexual abuse. Biles is one of the countless women and girls who survived sexual abuse at the hands of former USA Gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar. In an episode of the Facebook Watch show “Simone vs. Herself,” Biles opens up about being the last survivor of Nassar’s abuse who still actively competes for the organization. Watch the full episode [here](#).

VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act

The Crime Victims Fund (CVF) is the primary source of federal funding for myriad victim service providers across the country, including those who serve victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and trafficking. The CVF also provides direct support to victims by paying medical bills, covering lost wages, paying for funeral costs, and more.

Last month, the Senate voted unanimously to pass the [VOCA Fix to Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act](#), a critical piece of legislation for sustaining the CVF. The VOCA Fix Act was introduced by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) to address the recent decline in deposits to the CVF, which is funded through federal crime monetary penalties. The act requires the Department of Justice to deposit all monetary penalties from deferred prosecution and non-prosecution agreements into the CVF rather than into the general fund of the Treasury. President Biden signed the VOCA Fix Act into law on July 22, 2021, ensuring that victim service providers are granted necessary funding to effectively serve our communities.

Organization Spotlight: Courtney’s House

This quarter, DCCESV is pleased to highlight Courtney’s House, a nonprofit that fights to protect children from sexual exploitation and the devastation that comes from it. Courtney’s House fearlessly searches for children who are being forced into sexual exploitation and brings them into a safe environment where they and their families can heal, recover, and develop hopeful, dignified, and influential lives.



Every Friday and Saturday night, Courtney’s House can be found on the streets reaching out to suspected victims. They target specific areas where girls, boys, and women are trafficked or at high risk of being

trafficked. The organization hands out unassuming items that carry the Survivor Hotline phone number on them to provide a way for the victims to seek help when needed. The Survivor Hotline is run by survivors, for survivors. It runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

At Courtney's House, every survivor of sex trafficking can receive survivor-focused, trauma-informed, holistic services. Each child and teen is embraced with open and understanding arms by those who have walked in their shoes. Once a preliminary sex trafficking screening is done, a specialized intake process is followed to help to comprehend the full capacity of the trauma that each victim has endured.

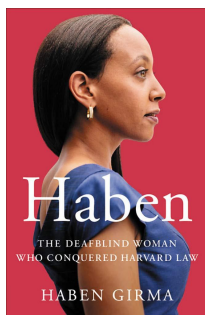
Courtney's House takes a holistic approach to healing. Staff survivors work with each child on an individual basis in counseling and therapy to support the child's recovery. Survivor Support Groups are also an integral component of Courtney's House. These groups focus on trauma recovery, education, and life skills along with fun, therapeutic activities such as dance, art, and yoga. In addition, each survivor has access to influential mentors and academic tutoring to fully embrace their ability to create a future full of hope and personal best. Parents of survivors will find open arms and support at Courtney's House.

Beyond supporting survivors, Courtney's House trains community officials and creates awareness of the reality of sex trafficking in neighborhoods across America. Courtney's House is committed to the belief that diminishing sex trafficking not only involves a relentless pursuit to help each victim, but widespread public awareness of this pressing issue.

To learn more about Courtney's House, how you can support their work, and available resources, visit www.courtneyshouse.org.

July Was Disability Pride Month!

In honor of Disability Pride Month, the DC Public library recommends four books that amplify the disabled community and celebrate how our differences make us stronger:



Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century by Alice Wong
Haben: The Deafblind Woman who Conquered Harvard Law by Haben Girma
Sitting Pretty: The View from My Ordinary Resilient Disabled Body by Rebekah Taussig
The Kiss Quotient by Helen Hoang

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