

PEACE OF MIND: STRENGTHENING VICTIM
PROTECTIONS UNDER KAYLEIGH'S LAW

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME AND FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE
OF THE
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PEACE OF MIND: STRENGTHENING VICTIM PROTECTIONS UNDER KAYLEIGH'S LAW

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
SURVEILLANCE

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Washington, DC

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m., in Room 2141, Rayburn House Office Building, the Hon. Andy Biggs [Chair of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Biggs, Kiley, Lee, Knott, McBath, and Raskin.

Mr. BIGGS. The Subcommittee will come to order. Without objection, the Chair is authorized to recess at any time. We want to welcome everyone to today's hearing on "Strengthening Victim Protections for Victims Under Kayleigh's Law."

I now recognize the gentlelady from Florida, Ms. Lee, to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ALL. I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you. I'll now recognize myself for an opening statement. I appreciate all of you being here today. Thank you. Today, the Crime Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee continues its important work to prioritize victims of violent crime and protect the most vulnerable members of our community.

Unfortunately, many of our State and Federal laws are not adequately protecting victims when their perpetrators are released. Even when a criminal is sentenced to lifetime probation, opportunities still exist for an offender's parole to be terminated, which prevents offenders from being held fully accountable to both their victims and society. This was all brought into focus by one brave survivor, advocate, and Arizona native, Kayleigh Kozak. After learning her abuser was attempting to terminate his probation, Kayleigh sought a protective order from the man who had hurt her as a child.

However, she was shocked to learn the court required evidence of a recent encounter between Kayleigh and this man to consider a protective order, effectively denying her request to keep herself

safe. Rather than accept that, this experience called her to advocacy.

Kayleigh turned her experience into action. She worked with Republicans in the Arizona legislature to pass the first Kayleigh's Law, giving survivors the ability to petition a judge for a lifetime prohibition against offenders convicted of violent crimes, including sex trafficking and child sexual abuse.

Arizona was the first to act, and I am pleased that Kayleigh is here today to share her story and her work to expand Kayleigh's Law protections across the country. Thanks to Kayleigh and others at the State level, many States such as Wisconsin and Tennessee now offer the same protection for victims.

Other State legislatures have similar bills. Unfortunately, in other States like California, the legislation faces an uphill battle. Everyone should be able to come together to support victim protection. One opponent of a lifetime protection order called the legislation unnecessary. This Subcommittee finds it unnecessary that victims have to tell their story over and over again to protect themselves from those who harm them at the very real risk that protection order lapse. That is shameful.

The victims like Kayleigh Kozak should not have to return to court repeatedly to face their offender to extend the order or be forced to wait until their offender tries to contact them to petition the court for lifetime protection.

Fortunately, my friend and colleague, Representative Hamadeh of Arizona introduced Kayleigh's Law at the Federal level, of which I am a cosponsor. H.R. 8481 will both ensure criminals are held accountable at the Federal level, while also serving as a model for States as they look to best serve victims of violent crime. This is victim-centered. This is public-safety focused. Kayleigh's Law allows the criminal justice system to work for victims and not against them.

I hope all Members of this Subcommittee can learn from our witnesses today, learn about how the law works in practice, but most importantly, learn the real-world impact of what it means to pass and implement propublic safety, victim-centered legislation. Because healing is not linear, and because safety should not have an expiration date. I appreciate being able to take this time for my statement. I am going to yield and now recognize the Ranking Member of this Subcommittee, Ms. McBath, from Georgia for her opening statement.

Ms. MCBATH. Thank you, Chair Jordan. Thank you to our witnesses that are here this morning. We really appreciate you taking the time to come and speak with us. Under a Democratic Congress and Democratic President, we made significant investments in public safety and crime reduction, igniting a historic decrease in crime that is continuing today. Far too many Americans still face domestic violence, sexual violence, and abuse every day.

In fact, according to a recent FBI report, violent crime within domestic relationships has been increasing in recent years. In the United States, more than a third of women and more than a quarter of men experience rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. The effects of these crimes can be profound.

Survivors of these crimes have very unique needs. Some survivors may find safety and peace of mind in pursuing a protective order that keeps their attacker away. Others may need medical care for the physical recovery, or trauma-informed counseling, to regain their resilience.

Some survivors may want to work with law enforcement to hold an abuser accountable and to ensure that no one else endures the harm that they have experienced. Still others may work to prevent violence against themselves and others by pursuing extreme risk protection order to disarm those who have shown that they pose an imminent risk of committing deadly acts of violence. This is just a small sample of the needs of survivors and the ways in which we can help them and prevent more crimes and more victims.

To protect and support survivors, and to actually prevent these crimes from occurring in the first place, a comprehensive approach is vital. At times, that is exactly what Congress has provided through critical legislation, like the Violence Against Women Act, the Victims of Crime Act, and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act. These lifesaving bills and others like them fall short of their potential without adequate funding.

Unfortunately, President Trump has repeatedly gutted programs that help victims, promote justice, and prevent crime. Last year, the Trump Administration abruptly terminated \$500 million in grant funding that reduced crime and improved our public safety. The cuts included more than 50 grants in support of victims' services, such as training to help nurses provide forensic examinations to survivors of sexual violence.

President Trump's recently released proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2027 would further neglect the needs of victims. It proposes to cut tens of millions of dollars in grants from the Office of Violence Against Women, including cuts to housing and legal assistance that help survivors find safety. These cuts are even more damaging given that the Crime Victims Fund, which serves over six million victims every year, is nearly depleted. That means six million victims of violent crime might be deprived of lifesaving support if we fail to prioritize the needs of victims and survivors and fight to restore the programs that we know work. We cannot let this happen.

I ask my Republican colleagues to join me in committing to funding these services. Because what good is a protective order is when a survivor can't secure adequate housing to escape their abuser or their trafficker, or the legal assistance to protect their rights or get custody of their children.

Victims and survivors must be given the support that they need to heal and to find stability in their lives again. They must be listened to, no matter what the wealth, status, or connections of the people who harmed them. Above all, they must be given the ability to choose how they chart their path forward toward recovery, justice, and safety.

I thank our witnesses for being here to elevate the needs of our victims and our survivors, and help us promote and strengthen safeguards for all Americans. I yield.

Mr. BIGGS. The gentlelady yields back. I will now recognize the Ranking Member of the Full Committee, Mr. Raskin, for his opening statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Chair Biggs. Welcome to all our witnesses. Sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and other forms of sexual abuse happen in every community and affect all people, regardless of gender or age.

According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, an average of 24 people per minute become victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner. That is more than 12 million women and men every year. Nationwide, more than one in five women have been raped or subjected to attempted rape. Sixty percent of rapes are committed by someone known to the victim, a number that increases to 93 percent for victims of minor age.

The lives of victims are radically altered. Not only do they suffer immediate, physical, and emotional trauma, they also often experience a wide-range of chronic, physical, and mental health problems as a result. They pay a heavy price in financial terms from related medical and therapeutic treatment, lost work, and legal expenses. The weight of these burdens is even greater for survivors with fewer resources and networks to draw on. Every survivor deserves to be safe, protected, and supported.

I am heartened to see that in recent years, States have taken action to improve protections for survivors. Often, thanks to the advocacy of survivors themselves—people like Kayleigh Kozak, who we get to hear from today. Because of Ms. Kozak dogged advocacy, survivors of sex crimes and other violent crimes may now petition the court in her home State of Arizona for a permanent order of protection against their perpetrators that is separate and apart from any action connected to a criminal prosecution.

Ms. Kozak's advocacy did not end in Arizona. As a result, many other States have similar laws, including my own home State of Maryland, which offers similar protections for victims and survivors. These laws go a long way in helping victims and survivors feel safe and to move forward with their lives.

There's a role for the Federal Government to play as well. Unfortunately, the Federal Government's responsibilities to help survivors have been deeply undercut by this administration. It has eliminated hundreds of programs created and funded to address the needs of victims and survivors.

In April of last year, President Trump declared unending support to every victim of crime. That same month, Members of our Committee will recall, the Department of Justice following the orders of DOGE and Elon Musk, abruptly terminated 373 different grants to State and local programs, totaling around \$500 million, including 59 of them, specifically, supporting survivors of sexual crimes.

Take, for instance, the National Organization for Victim Advocacy, or NOVA, the oldest victim assistance organization in the country, which lost a grant originally valued at \$870,000 for its victim advocacy corps. NOVA started the corps as a pilot in 2022 and helped train and accredit students to be victim advocates, providing a lifeline to victims of sexual assault, trafficking, domestic violence, and other crimes in communities often bypassed by traditional vic-

tim services. Out of the blue, with no justification offered, no hearings, the Trump Administration simply canceled the entire grant.

The Fiscal Year 2027 budget proposal seems to indicate that such cuts are going to continue. The President's budget proposes significant funding cuts for grant programs under the Office on Violence Against Women, slashing, for example, \$14 million to transitional housing grants, and \$15 million to legal assistance grants. Both housing and legal assistance are crucial for survivors and their children, enabling them to escape the cycle of violence and to start the long process of actually rebuilding their lives.

The administration has again proposed that the Office on Violence Against Women be consolidated with other offices within the DOJ, despite explicit statutory language requiring that the office exists as a standalone entity.

Trump has also taken a wrecking ball to the Federal Government's capacity to investigate and prosecute criminals, including those that commit sex crimes. The DOJ is hemorrhaging thousands of lawyers and having a hard time recruiting replacements. Data from ICE reveal that in 2025, an astounding 14,500 Federal law enforcement officers were diverted from their regular roles in investigating and prosecuting crimes to assist simply in immigration enforcement.

In an investigation from *The New York Times* found that from February through April of last year, Homeland Security investigators worked 33 percent fewer hours on child exploitation cases than they had in prior years. The results of this overwhelming focus on immigration enforcement as the DOJ quietly closed the stunning 23,000 criminal investigations in the first six months of the administration alone.

The Trump Administration seems inclined to ignore victims of sex crimes, to leave them unprotected, or, in some cases, even re-traumatize them. The DOJ moved convicted trafficker and groomer, Ghislaine Maxwell, from a higher security prison to a minimum-security camp in Texas where she has enjoyed five-star treatment with catered meals, private gym time, and access to a therapy puppy. Then, in a feeble attempt to comply with the law that we passed and President Trump signed into law to release all DOJ files on the Epstein conspiracy, the DOJ redacted the names of abusers, enablers, accomplices, and coconspirators, while shockingly failing, in many cases, to redact the names of the victims, many of whom have yet to identify themselves publicly.

We have a lot to talk about today. I want to welcome our witnesses, especially Ms. Kozak. To my friend, Lisae Jordan, the outstanding leader for the interest of victims of survivors of sexual assault and violence in the great State of Maryland, it was a great honor for me to get to work with her for 10 years when I was a State Senator in Annapolis. I hope we'll take today's testimony to heart. I yield back to you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. BIGGS. The gentleman yields. Without objection, all the opening statements will be put in the record. Now, I will introduce today's witnesses.

Ms. Kozak, Kayleigh Kozak, she is the namesake of Kayleigh's Law, versions of which have been enacted in a number of States and provided protections for survivors of sexual and domestic

abuse. She also advocates for other measures aimed at enhancing protection for victims and promoting justice.

The Honorable Suzette Martinez Valladares. Ms. Valladares represents District 23 in the California State Senate where she serves as the Vice Chair of the Health Committee and is a Member of the Judiciary Committee. She previously served in the California State Assembly.

Ms. Rachel Wright who is the National Policy Director for Right on Crime, a nonprofit organization. She previously served as an Assistant Solicitor General in the Kentucky Office of the Attorney General and as Counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Ms. Lisae Jordan is the Executive Director of the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault, a nonprofit organization that provides services and engages in advocacy pertaining to survivors of sexual assault.

I appreciate all of you being here testifying today in this very important topic. Thank you for coming.

We'll begin by swearing you in. If each of you would please rise and raise your right hand:

Do you swear or affirm under penalty of perjury that the testimony you are about to give is true and correct to the best of your knowledge, information, and belief, so help you God?

Let the record reflect that the witnesses have all answered in the affirmative. You may be seated. Thank you.

Please know that your written testimony, in its entirety, will be entered into the record. Accordingly, we ask that you summarize your testimony in five minutes.

We're going to begin now with Senator Valladares.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR SUZETTE MARTINEZ VALLADERES

Senator VALLADARES. Chair, Ranking Member, and the Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am California State Senator Suzette Valladares, and what we're seeing in California should matter nationwide because it's a warning.

Over the last several decades, a wave of criminal justice reforms passed by the Democrat super Majority has fundamentally shifted the balance in our system, not toward safety, not toward accountability, but a way from survivors, and in many cases, toward the very people who harm them. It's why I've been working with Kayleigh Kozak to advance Kayleigh's Law.

The principle is simple: If someone is dangerous enough to commit a serious violent crime, a survivor should not have to keep going back to court just to stay safe. In California today, that is exactly what we require. Survivors of sexual assault and violent crime are forced to renew protective orders every 4–7 years.

We are asking survivors to relive trauma, navigate a legal system, and prove over and over again that they still deserve protection. Meanwhile, the offender just has to wait. Kayleigh's Law fixes that. It allows courts, at sentencing, to issue lifetime protective orders for the most dangerous offenders. Because the truth is, the trauma doesn't expire, the threat doesn't expire, so the protection shouldn't either. That need is urgent.

Every minute in this country someone is assaulted. Every nine minutes, that victim is a child. In California, there are over 227,000 active restraining orders at any given time. We build a system with gaps, and the consequences are real.

A mother killed in front of her two-year-old one day after a restraining order expired. Survivors who did everything right, reported, testified, attained protection orders, only to be failed by a system that let those protections lapse. It's not simply a policy failure; it's a moral failure. This didn't happen by accident.

In California, we passed law after law reducing penalties, expanding early release, limiting tools for law enforcement, and creating more barriers for survivors. These policies are framed as compassionate, but survivors feel abandoned.

Now, layer on top of that a system through even the protections we do provide, comes with an expiration date. What message are we sending? Push the limits? Wait it out? That's not justice, it's risk. We've already seen how dangerous the gap can be. In a recent high-profile case, Natalia Bryant had to return to court to extend her restraining order after repeated violations. At one point, the individual believed the order had expired and used that moment to reach out again.

Most survivors don't have the resources she had. When protections lapse, they're left exposed. These risks are not hypothetical. In California this year, a sexually violent predator serving multiple life sentences, totaling over 300 years for crimes against more than a dozen children, including a three-year-old, was granted early release.

In another case, a five-year-old girl was so brutally assaulted that she could not walk. Deputies have to carry her to the emergency room. Her attacker was also granted early release.

As a mom, this is every parent's worst nightmare. It's pure evil. Survivors of violent crimes like this should not have to return to court again and again because protections can lapse; to be forced to relive that trauma.

This is why Kayleigh's Law is so vitally important. Thank you.
[The prepared statement of the Hon. Valladares follows:]

Testimony of Suzette Valladares

Peace of Mind: Strengthening Victim Protections Under Kayleigh's Law

Chairman, Ranking Members, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the importance of strengthening victim protections and ensuring our justice system prioritizes public safety.

My name is Suzette Valladares. I am a State Senator from California, and I serve as Vice-Chair of our Health Committee and a member of our Judiciary Committee.

California has become a warning sign to the rest of the nation. Deeply misguided “criminal justice reforms” have too often come at the expense of survivors. In my commitment to increasing public safety, I have been working with Kayleigh Kozack to enact Kayleigh’s Law in California.

Kayleigh’s Law is grounded in a basic, common-sense principle: victims of serious and violent crime should not have to repeatedly return to court to remain safe from their offenders.

Under current California law, many victims—particularly survivors of sexual assault and other violent crimes—must periodically renew protective orders. In California, this is every 4-7 years depending on the crime, or 15 years for felony domestic violence. This process forces victims to relive trauma, navigate hurdles, and face the very real risk that protections could lapse.

Kayleigh’s Law, as before you and the version I introduced in 2025 and at the beginning of this year, would allow courts to issue lifetime protective orders at sentencing for the most dangerous offenders.

This is not a radical concept. It is a practical safeguard that aligns consequences for offenders with the lasting impact their crimes have on victims. Yet efforts like this have faced resistance in my home state. That should concern every single one of us.

Domestic violence and felony sex offenses continue to inflict profound harm in California and across the country, particularly on women, children, and minority communities. Every minute in the United States someone is assaulted, and every 9 minutes that victim is a child¹. Nationally 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men experience severe physical violence from an

¹ [Facts and Statistics: The Scope of the Problem - RAINN](#)

intimate partner during their lifetime, and 3 in 10 women have been raped². Children are often caught in the same cycle of violence. Children exposed to violence in the home are 15 times more likely to be physically and/or sexually assaulted than the national average³. Minority victims face even greater risks: indigenous Americans are twice as likely to experience sexual assault as compared to all races⁴. In California, there are hundreds of thousands of active restraining orders at any given time. A statewide analysis found over 227,000 active restraining orders, the majority tied to domestic violence.⁵ These numbers show why long-term protective orders are essential in serious domestic violence and felony sex offense cases: for many victims, the danger does not end when the sentence begins.

To understand the urgency of Kayleigh's Law, you have to look at the broader context of California's public safety challenges.

In recent years, California's majority has adopted policies that have reduced penalties, expanded early release, limited tools available to law enforcement and prosecutors, and created more barriers for victims seeking protection. These policies are often described as reform by my democratic colleagues, but when you talk to survivors, to families, and to communities, you hear something very different. You hear that the system no longer feels like it's on their side.

Under Senate Bill 357 from 2022, the state repealed the crime of loitering with intent to engage in prostitution, removing a tool long used by law enforcement to intervene in street-level exploitation and identify potential trafficking victims. This built on lenient policies like Proposition 47 from 2014, which reclassified a range of offenses from felonies to misdemeanors, contributing in some jurisdictions to increases in reported low-level crime and reducing leverage to detain repeat offenders. Laws like these have made it difficult for law enforcement to disrupt trafficking networks and intervene early with vulnerable individuals.

I want to share a story of a woman that was shared with me by the California District Attorney's Association. She was 15 years old when she was victimized, at the hands of a 41 year old. During two trials lasting 4 years, the perpetrator kept in contact with her. Even going so far as to manipulate her to perjure herself on the stand to protect him. At one point

² [Domestic Violence Statistics - The Hotline](#)

³ [Domestic Violence Statistics - The Hotline](#)

⁴ [Statistics: Victims of Sexual Violence - RAINN](#)

⁵ [Temporary Restraining Orders \(TRO\) in California | Process, Rights & Legal Protections](#)

he fired his attorney so he could have the opportunity to cross-examine her. This is absolutely vile.

He was convicted and served his time and she has tried to move on and start a family. He has now been released and she now lives in fear that, with him no longer being behind bars, he will try to contact her or her family.

Kayleigh's Law is a direct response to that uncertainty. It provides certainty and stability in a system that currently offers neither.

Nowhere is this disconnect clearer than in California's handling of sexually violent predators. These are individuals the state itself has determined are likely to reoffend. And yet, time and time again, we see these offenders placed into communities with limited transparency, limited local input, and limited consideration for the victims who are forced to live with the consequence.

In August of 1999, Gregory Lee Vogelsang was convicted of more than two dozen child molestation and kidnapping charges involving 5 boys. He served 27 years of a 355 year-to-life- sentence and was granted parole late last year. He was eligible for early parole under California's elderly parole law, which was established in 2018. More recent legislation, under Assembly Bill 3234 from 2021, makes an inmate 50 years or older who has served at least 20 years of their sentence eligible. News of Vogelsang's early release came shortly after notification that David Allen Funston would be released early from his 1999 conviction of kidnapping and sexually assaulting multiple children, which sentenced him to 20 years and three life sentences in prison. Funston has been held under new charges in his case thanks to the due diligence of the Placer County District Attorney's Office.

Think about that for a moment. We are asking victims to trust a system that cannot guarantee where their high-risk offender will be placed, cannot guarantee long-term separation, and tells those same victims that they need to come back to court again and again to maintain a piece of paper for protection. This is not a system that works for victims, it works against them. We have lost balance.

I introduced Kayleigh's Law again this year as Senate Bill 1395. The original proposal called for a lifetime protective order for child survivors of serious felonies, violent felonies, and felony sex offenses. But in a legislature controlled by a Democratic majority, that standard was scaled back to 25 years and limited only to victims of felony sex offenses.

Now, 25 years is certainly better than the current 4-to-7-year cycle that forces survivors back into court to relive their trauma. But it falls short. It still tells survivors that their safety has an expiration date and that one day the burden will fall on them again to seek protection.

In a state that has some of the highest rates of sexual violence, we should be leading, not watering down. Senate Bill 1395 is a step forward, but it is not the full measure of justice survivors deserve, and I am committed to keep fighting.

At its core, this is an issue of restoring balance.

Kayleigh's Law will not overhaul a broken justice system in California. It does not eliminate due process or impose sweeping new mandates. It affirms a justice system that says that in the most serious cases, we are going to prioritize certainty for victims over convenience for offenders.

Kayleigh's Law is not just a policy proposal, it is a recognition that victims deserve lasting protection, not temporary relief.

California's experience should serve as both a warning and an opportunity. It shows what happens when policies drift too far in one direction, when the focus shifts away from accountability and public safety.

At the end of the day, this is not complicated. Victims of violent crime deserve to feel safe, not just for a short period of time or until their next court date, but for the long term.

This reform offers a clear, measured solution. It puts victims first, reduces unnecessary retraumatization, and strengthens the integrity of the justice system.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your questions.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate your testimony. Ms. Wright, you are recognized for five minutes.

STATEMENT OF RACHEL WRIGHT

Ms. WRIGHT. Chair Biggs, Ranking Member McBath, and the distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you very much for the invitation to testify before you today on enhancing safeguards for victims of violent and sex-based crimes. My name is Rachel Wright. I am the National Policy Director of Right on Crime, a campaign on criminal justice from the Texas Public Policy Foundation. We focus on conservative, data-driven solutions resulting in less crime, fewer victims, and safer communities.

Prior to joining Right on Crime, I served as both the trial and appellate prosecutor, representing the Commonwealth of Kentucky, my home State, and also got to work for Senator Chuck Grassley on the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee.

As a prosecutor and a policy expert on crime, criminal justice, and victims' rights, I have seen firsthand the impact that a criminal charge and conviction can have on both parties involved. For many victims, especially those of violent and sexual crimes, the physical and emotional pain is long-lasting and uniquely damaging.

The criminal justice system is only as strong as its ability to protect the most vulnerable and ensure that those harmed by the crime are not retraumatized by the very process intended to deliver it justice. A common tool used to protect these vulnerable populations is to limit or prohibit contact between the offender and the victim.

There are a few ways this was already done in the Federal criminal law. One is while pending trial. There, a Federal judge may require a defendant to avoid contact with the alleged victim or potential witnesses pending trial. In making this decision, the judge will typically consider the nature of the crime, the defendant's criminal history, and public safety considerations.

Also, after a criminal sentence has been served, and the defendant is on supervised release, a judge may order a defendant to stay away from certain places or people. However, these protections are often temporary, and no-contact conditions only last as long as the term of supervised release itself, which is typically 3–5 years.

For both pretrial and supervised release, no-contact conditions between the defendant and the victim are highly discretionary. This means for the same crime, the outcomes for victims can differ based on which judge makes the decision.

The proposal before this Committee, H.R. 8481, Kayleigh's Law Act of 2026, looks at some of these issues head-on. At its core, the bill seeks to prevent revictimization, stop future crimes, and ensure consistency across Federal judicial circuits. Fashioned after Kayleigh's Law passed in Arizona; this bill will impose a lifetime injunction between defendants and victims for specific covered offenses.

This policy has certain benefits, which are quite apparent.

First, it would reduce recidivism. Lifetime injunctions can keep an offender from contacting a victim he or she sexually or violently attacked. This bill could stop the revolving door of the repeat offender in its tracks, which is particularly important for violent

crimes and sexual crimes. When paired with proven rehabilitation and reintegration policies, lifetime injunctions can be a critical piece of improving public safety.

Second, a Federal Kayleigh's Law would ensure consistency among Federal courts. The clarity for when an injunction would be imposed would mean that a judge in Arizona would rule the same way as a judge in Georgia, or even Texas to California.

Insofar as criminal sentences imposed on defendants should be consistent and uniform across Federal courts, so should the impact on victims.

Third, this bill will complement ongoing State efforts. Kayleigh's Law, while spearheaded in Arizona, is also being considered in other States, too, and to be sure this Federal bill before the Committee would be markedly different than these State proposals.

Current State laws are often in place. For example, State courts often hand down no-contact orders through family law courts with domestic violence orders, temporarily restraining orders, and emergency protection orders. Family law is unique to the States only, and there is no Federal analogue. That's why this Federal bill proposes making a no-contact condition part of the criminal sentence itself. By embedding these protections into the criminal sentence, this bill closes a critical gap, ensuring no victim's safety depends on circumstances out of her control, but is it protected as a matter of Federal law?

True justice should not be measured just by the length of a prison sentence, but by the restoration of the survivor. By providing permanent peace of mind, victims will be empowered to move forward in their lives without fear. Right on Crime applauds this Committee's longstanding dedication to ensuring better outcomes for victims, reforming offenders when safe, and reducing crime. We look forward to working with the authors of this bill to ensure the language is meticulously crafted and responsive to this necessary issue.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify. Thank you, Congressman Hamadeh for your leadership on this legislation. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Wright follows:]



**Statement of Rachel Wright
National Policy Director of Right On Crime**

**U.S. House Judiciary Committee
Subcommittee on Crime and Federal Government Surveillance
“Peace of Mind: Strengthening Victim Protections Under Kayleigh’s Law”**

April 29, 2026

Chairman Biggs, Ranking Member McBath, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee: thank you for inviting me to participate in today’s hearing on enhancing safeguards for victims of violent and sex-based crimes.

My name is Rachel Wright, and I am the National Policy Director of Right On Crime, a national criminal justice campaign of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, where we focus on conservative, data-driven solutions resulting in less crime, fewer victims, and safer communities. Prior to my role at Right On Crime, I served as Senior Counsel to Senator Chuck Grassley on the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee and represented the Commonwealth of Kentucky – my home state – as both a trial and appellate prosecutor.

As a prosecutor and policy expert on crime, criminal justice, and victims’ rights, I have seen firsthand the impact that a criminal charge and conviction can have on the parties involved. A verdict and sentence affect both the defendant and victim, their families, and their communities. But the physical and emotional pain of a crime does not end at sentencing. For many victims, especially those of violent and sexual crimes, the pain is long-lasting and uniquely damaging. Given the scope of violent and sex-based crimes – particularly against women – it is time for Congress to consider further opportunities to protect victims long term.

Globally, nearly 1 in 3 women aged 15 years and older has experienced physical or sexual violence.¹ And according to the most recent report on crime victimization by the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics, violent crime affected roughly 23 out of every 1,000 Americans in 2024 —amounting to millions of victims nationwide.²

The criminal justice system is only as strong as its ability to protect the most vulnerable and ensure that those harmed by crime are not unnecessarily re-traumatized by the very process intended to deliver justice. A common tool to protect these vulnerable populations is to limit – or prohibit – contact between the person who committed the crime and the victim.

¹ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/facts-and-figures/facts-and-figures-ending-violence-against-women#:~:text=women%20and%20girls-Prevalence%20of%20violence%20against%20women%20and%20girls,0.2%20per%20cent%20annual%20decline>

² <https://bjs.ojp.gov/document/cv24.pdf>



Currently, there are some avenues within the federal criminal code to limit contact between a defendant and a victim. Pending trial or when considering pretrial release, a federal judge may require the defendant to “avoid all contact with an alleged victim of the crime” or potential witnesses.³ But before making this decision, the judge weighs several factors, including the nature of the crime, the history and characteristics of the defendant, and the danger the defendant would pose to the community if released.⁴ Needless to say, these factors are incredibly discretionary.

After a criminal sentence is served and a defendant is on supervised release, a judge may order a defendant to stay away from certain places or people.⁵ Specifically, if deemed appropriate, a judge will require a defendant to “refrain from frequenting specified kinds of places or from associating unnecessarily with specified persons[.]”⁶ However, these protections are often temporary and aligned with the length of a defendant’s term of supervised release – typically three to five years for most offenses. And, like pretrial release determinations, these post-incarceration no-contact conditions are discretionary.

Discretion is a tool that, when wisely utilized, can benefit all parties and lead to efficient and effective criminal justice outcomes. But, when wielded or abused, judicial discretion often negatively impacts victims. It can lead to dangerous offenders being released pending trial. It can result in a criminal serving too short or too long of a sentence. And it can cause revictimization and additional crimes committed.

The proposal before this Committee seeks to mitigate and prevent revictimization, stop future crimes from happening, and ensure consistency across federal judicial circuits. Fashioned after “Kayleigh’s Law” passed in Arizona, this bill would impose lifetime injunctions for violent and sexual federal crimes. A no-contact order would remain in effect even after the defendant has completed his sentence and supervision.

The benefits of this policy are apparent.

First, it would reduce revictimization and recidivism. A lengthy injunction intends to bar a defendant from contacting a victim he violently or sexually attacked. This means that the victim is more likely to be permanently insulated from being targeted by this offender again. It would also seriously deter the offender from seeking to commit another crime. The potential impact is significant: fewer crimes, fewer victims, and safer communities.

Second, a federal “Kayleigh’s Law” would ensure a consistent approach among federal judges and judicial circuits on when no-contact orders are appropriate. The bill tailors the imposition of the lifetime injunction to violent crimes and federal sex crimes, eliminating the possibility that a judge

³ 18 U.S.C. § 3142(c)(1)(B)(v).

⁴ 18 U.S.C. § 3142(g).

⁵ 18 U.S.C. § 3563(b)(6).

⁶ *Id.*



in Arizona would rule differently than a judge in Georgia, Texas, or California. One of the tenants of federal criminal sentencing is uniformity.⁷ Insofar as criminal sentences imposed on defendants should be consistent and uniform across federal courts, so should the impact on victims.

And lastly, this bill would complement ongoing state efforts to prioritize victim protection. “Kayleigh’s Law” was spearheaded in Arizona, but similar victim-centered policies are being seen in other states, too, such as Wisconsin⁸, Tennessee⁹, and California¹⁰. To be sure, a federal version of these policies would be markedly different. State courts may require no contact between two parties through domestic violence orders, temporary restraining orders, and emergency protection orders. These injunctions are typically handed down through family law courts, which are uniquely within the jurisdiction of state law. There is no federal analogue. And ordinarily in the states, victims must make recurring requests to the court for extensions of these protective orders, sometimes as frequently as every 1-2 years. This federal proposal, then, mimics the unique structure of Arizona’s law by making the no-contact order part of the criminal sentence itself. It is distinctly different from family law and state civil law protection orders. But its structure – by tying the no-contact mandate to the criminal sentence itself – would accomplish a similar outcome.

True justice should not be measured just by the length of a prison sentence, but by the restoration of the survivor. By providing this permanent peace of mind, victims will be empowered to move forward with their lives without fear. Right On Crime applauds this Committee’s longstanding dedication to ensuring better outcomes for victims, reforming offenders when safe to do so, and reducing crime. We look forward to working with the authors of this bill to ensure the language is meticulously crafted and responsive to this necessary issue.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and to Congressman Hamadeh for his leadership on this legislation. I look forward to your questions.

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<https://www.ussc.gov/#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20Sentencing%20Commission%2C%20a,the%20basics%20of%20federal%20sentencing.>

⁸ <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/related/acts/256>

⁹ <https://law.justia.com/codes/tennessee/title-36/chapter-3/part-6/section-36-3-627/>

¹⁰ <https://legiscan.com/CA/text/SB1395/id/3371513>; see also <https://legiscan.com/CA/text/AB1931/2023>.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you. I now recognize Ms. Jordan for your five minutes.

STATEMENT OF LISAE C. JORDAN

Ms. JORDAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair, Ranking Member, and the Members of this Committee, thank you for the invitation to be here today. I am Lisae Jordan. I am Executive Director and Counsel with the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA). Thank you to Kayleigh Kozak, the brave survivor at the table with me today.

MCASA is Maryland's State sexual assault coalition. We have sister coalitions in States and Territories across the country. Like our sister coalitions, we include the States' rape crisis centers, survivors, professionals, and others dedicated to ending sexual violence.

MCASA is home to the Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI), which provides direct legal services to survivors of sexual violence across the State of Maryland.

As you consider this important legislation, MCASA urges you to center the needs of survivors and appreciate the complexity of survivors' experience. Every survivor is different. I am going to add to Kayleigh's story and ask you to consider the case of a 14-year-old girl who's vulnerable and needy, targeted by an abuser calling her beautiful and helping her feel special. The offender sexually abuses her, recruits her into human trafficking, using all the slow and careful grooming that sex offenders employ, gains her trust, cuts her off from the support of those who love her, draws her in, and then sexually exploits her.

Before this young woman ever reports, she needs to know that what is happening is not her fault, and that it's illegal. She needs to have information, she needs counseling, she needs protection. To have justice, she needs trained prosecutors who will take her story seriously and prosecute swiftly. She needs her own advocate or attorney to help ensure that her rights and her safety are protected. The permanent protective order proposed is one of those protections that should be available. Be clear, more is needed for this young woman to access justice.

In Maryland, as Mr. Raskin mentioned, we do have a permanent protective order available to survivors, but it's only in very specific types of cases. I do not recommend Maryland's law as a model. What is effective about it is this: It's part of the civil protective order system. That makes it easier for our officers to arrest someone who is violating it.

By contrast, the criminal stay-away has all the deficits that Ms. Wright explained, but it's also very difficult to enforce on the ground. Enforcement through contempt of court is not an effective on-the-ground means of enforcement.

MCASA's greater concern is that more needs to be done to address the complexities of sexual assault and the needs of survivors. We should help sexual survivors because they deserve our support as crime victims, as a moral matter, but also because they need to be treated as heroes when they do report. If people don't report, sex offenders remain free.

Thank you for everything this Committee has done to help support survivors of sexual assault. I want to highlight legal services supported by Federal laws. They are critically important to supporting survivors. Under H.R. 8481, a victim's rights attorney could help negotiate all these different aspects of obtaining safety. A sex trafficking survivor could ask for help protecting privacy. A survivor abused by her teacher could ask for accommodation in school. Protective parents could help get a divorce from a sex-offending parent. Having effective counsel and legal services is key to making the laws that you enact effective for survivors.

Our programs also need your help. The persistent delays in grant administration, and the instability at the Federal level, are threatening services. Planning is difficult. Reductions in the Federal workforce means we are seeing demand from people in Maryland who would have thought private services in the past—they're unable to donate or support us.

Programs like SALI are unable to apply for competitive grants because applications have not been released. Other programs have applied for funding, but then not heard, being left in limbo, and perhaps having to lay off staff. Cuts to VOCA programs are devastating across the country. The safety net that America has built to help victims of crime is at risk of breaking. We are asking for your help to stop this.

If H.R. 8481 was enacted, services supported with VOCA and VAWA, the programs you have created, they would help those survivors. Survivors need the services; programs need the grant funding you have created. Permanent protection for survivors is important, but they are part of a larger tapestry of responding to sexual assault. Thank you so much again for your time today. We look forward to working together.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Jordan follows:]



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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**Statement of Lisae C. Jordan, Esquire
Executive Director & Counsel
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault**

**Before the Subcommittee on
Crime and Federal Government Surveillance
of the House Judiciary Committee**

**Committee Hearing on “Peace of Mind: Strengthening Victim Protections Under
Kayleigh’s Law”**

April 29, 2026

**Mr. Chairman, Ranking Members, and distinguished Members of the Committee:
Thank you for the opportunity to be here today.**

**My name is Lisae C Jordan, and I serve as the Executive Director & Counsel of the
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault**

The **Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA)** is a non-profit membership organization that includes all of the State’s rape crisis centers, law enforcement, mental health and health care providers, attorneys, educators, survivors of sexual violence and other concerned individuals. MCASA includes the Sexual Assault Legal Institute which provides direct legal services for survivors across the State of Maryland. SALI helps enforce crime victims’ rights like the right to a permanent injunction that you are contemplating today.

MCASA is Maryland’s sexual assault coalition. We have sister coalitions in states and territories across the country. Each of these coalitions help the survivors in your states,

and help support the community-based rape crisis centers that that respond to your constituents. Your state coalitions can provide you with a direct and honest connection with what is happening on the ground in your districts and I urge you to forge strong ties with them. The **National Alliance to End Sexual Violence** represents us here in DC and can help support you in these efforts.

I have worked to end violence against women and children for virtually my entire legal career, spanning over three decades now. At MCASA, I support an expert and committed staff and our work includes providing training for advocates, prosecutors, law enforcement, schools, and communities about ending sexual violence and responding to survivors. MCASA supports local Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs), educates policymakers, and provides public education. We house Maryland's **Sexual Assault Kit Initiative's Victim Notification Team**, providing information and support to survivors with untested rape kits and advocating for meaningful access to forensic exams. MCASA is also home to **SALI, the Sexual Assault Legal Institute**, which provides direct legal services to survivors of sexual violence. We help enforce the laws that our legislature and this Congress enact.

HR8481 – Permanent Injunctions

The bill before you today, HR8481, known as Kayleigh's Law, is an excellent example of one small aspect of the myriad of needs a sexual assault survivor faces. Very, very few sexual assault or child sexual abuse cases are prosecuted, fewer are successfully prosecuted, and even fewer result in a conviction for a sexual crime. However, when a sex offender is convicted, it is critical that the survivor have the ability to prevent the offender from contacting them.

It is correct that current federal law fails to include adequate protections for survivors and keep offenders away from survivors. With great respect we suggest that, as proposed, HR8481

has some technical flaws. More importantly, if the members wish to address the needs of sexual assault survivors and to hold offenders accountable, HR8481 should be expanded to more fully address the needs of survivors.

Incidence of Sexual Violence

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data, nearly half of all women in the United States experience physical sexual violence in their lifetime.¹ According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, an average of 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States—more than 12 million women and men over the course of one year.²

Nationwide, more than one woman in five has been raped, or subjected to attempted rape.³ In some states, that number is closer to 40%.⁴ In marginalized communities, the rate may be even higher.⁵ And while most perpetrators of sexual violence target women and girls, men and boys also experience sexual violence—10% of adult rape victims in the United States are male, and boys comprise approximately 18% of the victims of child sexual assaults that are reported to law enforcement.⁶

¹ Ruth W. Leemis, et al., *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2023/2024 Sexual Violence Data Brief*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (2025) <https://www.cdc.gov/nisvs/media/pdfs/sexualviolence-brief.pdf>.

² NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE, <https://www.thehotline.org/stakeholders/domestic-violence-statistics/> (last visited Apr. 27, 2026).

³ Ruth W. Leemis, et al., *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2023/2024 Sexual Violence Data Brief*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (2025) <https://www.cdc.gov/nisvs/media/pdfs/sexualviolence-brief.pdf>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *American Indians and Crime, 1992-2002* (2004).

⁶ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement* (2000).

More than 80% of rape survivors were raped when younger than age 25, and nearly half of rape survivors were assaulted as minors—almost always by someone they knew⁷ and often by someone they or their family trusted.⁸ Under such circumstances, many survivors struggle to come forward. Domestic and sexual violence also inflicts emotional distress that tracks the degree of trust that is violated: Among survivors victimized by a stranger, 67% experience emotional distress. For survivors victimized by a family member or close friend, the prevalence of emotional distress rises to 79%. Where the perpetrator is an intimate partner, the figure increases to 84%.

The trauma from domestic and sexual violence compounds when survivors do not feel safe. More than one in five women—22.5% or 28.8 million—in the United States have experienced stalking during their lifetimes.⁹ Nearly all female stalking victims felt afraid, threatened, or concerned for their safety or the safety of others. More than half were threatened with physical harm, and most female victims suffered mental or emotional harm as a direct result of stalking behaviors.¹⁰

Most Sexual Assault Does Not Result in Prosecution or Conviction

The realities of sexual assault can be surprising to many of us because so few rapes are ever reported to the police. Unfortunately, rape, sexual abuse, and human sex trafficking continue to be crimes shrouded in secrecy and shame. Only about 30% of sexual assault victims ever report their attacks to law enforcement. Out of every 1,000 rape cases, 11 are referred to prosecution and 7 result in a felony conviction. Sexual assault survivors can experience

⁷ *Statistics: Perpetrators of Sexual Violence*, RAINN, <https://rainn.org/facts-statistics-the-scope-of-the-problem/statistics-perpetrators-of-sexual-violence/> (last visited Apr. 27, 2026).

⁸ *This April marks 25 years of Sexual Assault Awareness Month*, NAT'L CENTER FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME (Apr. 13, 2026), <https://victimsofcrime.org/sexual-violence-is-more-common-than-many-people-realize-do-you-know-the-stats/>.

⁹ Smith SG, et al., *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2023/2024 Stalking Data Brief*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (2025), <https://www.cdc.gov/nisvs/media/pdfs/stalking-brief.pdf>.

¹⁰ *Id.*

physical and emotional problems for years including the same symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder that affect our troops returning from combat service. Federal resources have and should continue to open doors to survivors for assistance in their recovery.

Approximately 1,640 rape crisis centers across the country help victims of rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, and incest rebuild their lives by providing a range of vital services to survivors. These centers operate 24-hour hotlines, provide 24-hour accompaniment to law enforcement departments, hospitals, and legal proceedings, and offer short- and long-term individual counseling and support groups for victims and their families. Local programs also assist victims with obtaining compensation and restitution. Rape crisis centers serve all victims of sexual violence, including women who have been raped, child sexual assault and incest survivors, adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, male victims, sex trafficking survivors, persons with disabilities, and victims who experience abuse in later life. Many also provide necessary aid to family members and others affected by sexual violence. Services provided by rape crisis centers do not discriminate based on gender or characteristics of the person assaulted. They are available to all victims and survivors.

Federal Support for Survivors Seeking Access to Justice

The federal response to ending sexual violence, including child sexual abuse, is wide ranging. Support for basic needs like housing, and for mental health support and counseling, is often a prerequisite to seeking justice. Survivors need to feel supported in order to come forward. We should help these survivors because they deserve our support as crime survivors, but also because survivors who come forward are heroes. **Without the brave survivors who report sexual abuse and assault, communities are in danger because sex offenders go free.**

The Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP) is one of several Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grant programs that help provide fundamental structural support for rape crisis centers. The Victim of Crime Act (VOCA), provides support for survivors of all types of crime, including survivors of sexual assault and child abuse. Funding from the Rape Prevention & Education (RPE) act, administered by the Centers for Disease Control, help stop sexual assault before it happens. All are critical to responding to sexual assault.

Legal services are key to supporting survivors. The Legal Assistance to Victims (LAV) program under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) supports survivors, as does funding under VOCA and through the Office of Victims of Crime. Consider the proposal under HR8481: a crime victims' rights attorney could assist a survivor with the process proposed. They could help communicate with the prosecutor, advocate for prompt prosecution, file a motion at the sentencing hearing, and – if an order was violated – file a petition for contempt. Unlike prosecutors, crime victims' rights attorneys follow the direction of the survivor. Crime victims' rights attorneys also work with local community rape crisis centers to ensure survivors have safety planning and referrals.

Legal needs of survivors are not limited to crime victims' rights. For example, legal services help these survivors:

- a sex trafficking survivor protecting privacy;
- a survivor who is abused by her teacher and needs accommodations at school, such as changing classrooms or rescheduling exams;
- protective parents need legal help to obtain a custody order and deny visitation when their child has been sexually abused by the other parent.

The list goes on and on and the legal needs of survivors are too often seen as “extra” even though having effective counsel and legal services is the key to making the laws enacted by legislators effective. We urge the members to work to ensure legal services for survivors have consistent and sustained support.

Federal Delay is Harming Survivors and Endangering Our Communities

Maryland is fortunate to have some state support for rape crisis centers and for legal services for survivors. Despite this state support, the persistent delays and instability at the federal level are threatening services. Like all nonprofits, sexual assault services providers face workforce challenges. When vacancies occur, programs are now scared to fill them because it is unclear if federal funding will be available. Programs like SALI, the Sexual Assault Legal Institute, wish to compete for regularly available federal funds, but OVW funding announcements (Notice of Funding Opportunity) have not been issued. Other programs have applied for federal funds and then faced long delays about whether they have received an award. Programs are considering whether they should cut back and stop the work that supports survivors and helps hold sex offenders accountable.

Cuts to VOCA funding are devastating programs across the country. The safety net that America has built to help victims of crime is at risk of breaking. MCASA appreciates that the House has passed the Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act: it is critical for survivors across the country. If HR8481 was enacted, the services that VOCA and VAWA funds are needed to help survivors have meaningful access to the law.

The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence performs an annual survey of sexual assault program across the country and the results of this year’s survey are frightening. Rape crisis services report a 46% decrease in sexual assault services and a 50% decrease in funding for

sexual assault prevention. At the same time, 60% of programs report an increase in need for sexual assault services generally, with a 44% increase in need for services by adults sexually abused as children. Maryland's experience is no different. Grants have been delayed. Planning is very difficult. Reductions in the federal workforce mean we are seeing demand from people who may have sought private services in the past. They also reduce donations and support.

Maryland's Permanent Protective Order

Permanent Protective Orders can be an important part of access to justice. We echo the message of all the witnesses here today to say that a permanent order to stay away from a victim can provide the peace of mind to help a victim become a survivor. We applaud Kayleigh Kozak and her work using her voice as a survivor to make changes in state law. Our concerns about HR8481 are about the scope and technical aspects, and in no way a disagreement with her efforts or the general idea of permanent orders.

In Maryland, we have a Permanent Protective Order available to survivors in only very specific cases, Md. Code Ann., [Family Law Article §4-506\(k\)](#):

- when there is a civil protective order in place, AND the defendant was criminally prosecuted and sentenced to at least five years for the act or abuse and served one year;
- a defendant violated a protective order by committing an act of abuse AND criminally prosecuted and sentenced to at least five years for the act or abuse and served one year;
- or when the defendant consents to the entry of the permanent order, often as a provision in a plea agreement.

These Maryland orders are permanent "unless terminated at the request of the victim". During the 2025 Maryland legislative session, the provision allowing for entry of a permanent order by consent was added to the statute. This was supported by both victim/survivor advocates and the defense bar because it is hugely important to survivors and because it often allows defendants to negotiate a more favorable plea agreement. Maryland's law is complicated and limited and is

not suggested as a model, but it is a good example of the types of options available at the state level.

The benefit of adding a permanent option to a *civil* protective order statute is that it is more easily enforced by law enforcement responding to a reported violation of the order. In at least some cases, if an offender approaches the victim and there is a protective order in place, they can be arrested.

The *criminal* justice system also includes various approaches to keep offenders away from victims and survivors. However, a criminal stay-away order typically requires that the defendant be under the supervision of parole or probation. Parole and probation are controlled by government officials, not by survivors, and government does not always fully address survivors' needs. Adding a permanent order to this system would require extending supervision and keeping court cases open in order to be effectively enforceable. Adding a permanent protective order initiated by survivors is an improvement to one controlled by government, but this would require creating systems to both request and enforce the order. Another variation to consider is that some criminal sentences for sex offenders include lifetime supervision, and this may include a stay-away order. Again, however, this is a function of government supervision, not a survivor's choice.

As drafted, HR8481 suggests enforcement by contempt of court. This process is unwieldy for survivors and poses challenges in the field. If an offender approaches a survivor in violation of an injunction enforced by contempt of court, they are not arrested. Instead, the survivor would have to report the violation and begin an involved court process.

Centering Survivors

As the members consider this important legislation, MCASA urges you to center the needs of survivors and to appreciate the complexity of survivors' experiences. Consider, as an example, a case of a 14 year old girl who is vulnerable and suffering low self-esteem. She is targeted by an abuser calling her beautiful and helping her feel special. The abuser recruits her into human trafficking using all the slow and careful grooming that sex offenders use. He gains her trust. He cuts her off from the support of those who love her. He draws her in and then exploits her.

Before this young woman ever reports, she needs to know that what is happening is not her fault and that it's illegal. She needs to have information. She needs counseling to address guilt and shame. She may or may not have become entangled in the juvenile justice system or be using drugs. She needs a safe place to stay. She needs to make up the education she has missed or receive support to gain employment. To help prosecute the offender, she needs trained prosecutors who will take her story seriously and prosecute swiftly. She needs her own advocate or attorney to help ensure that her rights to be notified, present, and heard in court are enforced. She needs help ensuring that whatever safety provisions are available, are included in any sentence imposed. And she needs to have advocacy if and when any of those rights are violated. A permanent protective order should be one of the protections available, and more is needed for this young woman to access justice. MCASA urges the subcommittee to take every step available to ensure sexual assault survivors have *all* of the tools and support they need for safety, healing, and justice.

RAPE CRISIS SERVICES ARE ESSENTIAL

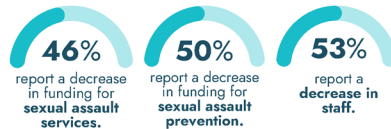
Rape Crisis Centers (RCC)s across the country are facing funding delays and cuts. At the same time, demand for services and prevention is increasing. As a result, individuals and communities will suffer. RCCs are critical for survivor healing and safety.



National Alliance to
End Sexual Violence

I will never forget the way you listened without judgement, supported without condition, and always had your doors open. You gave me dignity when it was being stripped away, and you reminded me that I had a voice worth hearing and rights worth defending. You were, and still are, part of my survival and healing story.—Survivor, Alaska RCC

DECREASE IN FUNDING

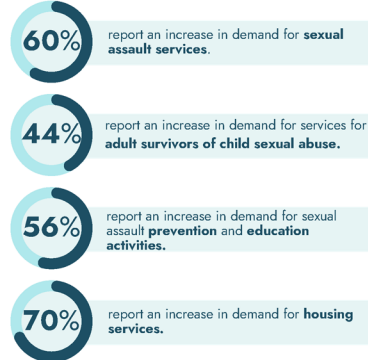


Our staff is at a breaking point and cannot continue to manage the influx of demand at the current funding level.

—Pennsylvania RCC

DATA REFLECTS FINDINGS FROM THE NAESV 2025 ONLINE SURVEY OF RAPE CRISIS CENTERS.

INCREASE IN DEMAND



CONSEQUENCES TO RCCs AND SURVIVORS

30% of staffing reductions were **lay-offs** due to **funding cuts**.

33% report a **waiting list** for mental health counseling/therapy services.

50% report having **no mental health** counseling or therapy providers on staff.

Following a recent funding loss, our counseling team has been reduced, resulting in a waitlist for ongoing therapeutic services....demand continues to grow, yet reduced staffing limits how quickly survivors can access the long-term support they need.

—Texas RCC

Currently, due to limited staffing we have a counseling waiting list of over 100 people. It is taking on average 4 months for new clients to get in for counseling. Additionally, there are times we do not have a sexual assault nurse or advocate available for clients to obtain a sexual assault exam. —Florida RCC

FUNDING IS CRITICAL for Sexual Assault Services and Prevention

In these challenging times, it is up to us to make sure these services remain available and let survivors know they don't have to face this road in solitude. —Colorado RCC



National Alliance to
End Sexual Violence

WHAT RAPE CRISIS CENTERS ARE SAYING



Housing is the **#1 unmet need of survivors of sexual assault**, followed by cash assistance, basic needs (such as food and clothing), and mental health care.



Many programs lack capacity for **support groups**, **transportation options** and **housing resources** for survivors.

I am no longer the person I was when I walked through those doors. Because of the tools I received, I am continually overcoming obstacles. My future is brighter than my past. I can now help other women see their worth. I am writing books about my experiences. I am grateful for the way you made me feel like I was the only client you had. I felt seen.

—Survivor, Illinois RCC

A survivor was able to receive support and advocacy during a SANE exam. Follow-up care afterwards included counseling services, court advocacy and safety planning. The survivor was also able to obtain a protection order as part of a safety plan and reestablish a support system in friends and family during their healing journey. The survivor later reported that they felt supported and empowered by the advocacy services they received from our organization.

—Missouri RCC

Rape Crisis Centers need increased investment to continue their vital work—sexual violence prevention, awareness, and supporting survivors at every stage of their healing.

Without additional funding and staff capacity, survivors may face delays in accessing the care and safety they urgently deserve.

—Ohio RCC

Sometimes, the most meaningful support is not just in the services we provide, but in the humanity we offer.

—California RCC

Sexual assault survivors seeking out mental health services at our organizations are added to our waiting list and provided referrals to other therapy providers in the community. However, resources are limited community-wide and most face significant wait times to access mental health services.

—North Dakota RCC

HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?
Contact Terri Poore, Policy Director
terri@endsexualviolence.org

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you. I know we're voting, but we're going to go ahead and hear Ms. Kozak, and then we'll take the recess to vote. Ms. Kozak, you are recognized for your five minutes.

STATEMENT OF KAYLEIGH KOZAK

Ms. KOZAK. Good morning, Chair Biggs, Ranking Member, and the Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of this bill. Thank you to Congressman Hamadeh for introducing it.

My name is Kayleigh Kozak. I am a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, and I am the namesake behind Kayleigh's Law.

When I was a little girl, telling the truth cost me everything. At 12 years old, a trusted teacher, who was also my club soccer coach, chose to sexually abuse me over a two-year period.

In 2006, that man was originally charged with eight counts of child sexual abuse, classified as a dangerous crime against a child under Arizona law. Offenses that carried a potential sentence of 25 years to life in prison.

He pled down to two counts, served his nine months in jail, and received two terms of lifetime probation in lieu of prison time per his request. A sweetheart plea deal for him that has become a living hell for me.

In January 2020, my world came to a halt when I learned that he had petitioned to have his so-called lifetime probation terminated. If it ended, every single safeguard that I had would disappear. Three weeks later, I stood in court, broken and confused, begging a judge not to grant his motion. This experience exposed a critical flaw in our justice system. A victim's protection is too often tied to and entirely depends on the perpetrator's post-conviction conditions, such as probation or sex offender registry requirements.

This is what ignited Kayleigh's Law. The abuse itself is horrific, but no one can prepare you for the hell that follows even decades later.

Just two months ago in February 2026, I found myself back in court again for the same reason as 2020. He had again petitioned to have his lifetime probation terminated. Only this time, I witnessed my abuser be served with a lifetime no-contact injunction under Kayleigh's Law in Arizona. I now have permanent lifelong protection.

The harm caused by sexual assault is not temporary, it is lifelong. The protections for those who have been sexually violated should be lifelong, too. However, in most States are Federal—even when a heinous crime is committed, and an individual is convicted, obtaining a protective order requires continued proof, additional court hearings, which ultimately revictimizes and retraumatizes victims. Still the order remains temporary and limiting.

There is little to no uniformity across States or federally pertaining to sex crime definitions, sex offender registry, and probation requirements, or protective orders.

If the justice system is going to continue to grant leniency to individuals convicted of sexual offenses, fail to fully enforce SORNA standards, and remove convicted offenders from probation or sex offender registry, which on conviction, are typically the conditions

that prevent an offender from having contact with their victim, then the very least it should do is guarantee victims permanent protection from the person who is convicted of sexually violating them. Victims everywhere deserve this protection. Pursuing this law nationally has always been the goal.

Kayleigh's Law has already passed in multiple States with strong bipartisan support. In Arizona alone, in its first year, more than 1,000 victims obtained a permanent order of protection. Arizona has set the gold standard. It's time for the Federal Government and every State to follow suit.

This is a national crisis. Federal sex crimes have surged more than 62 percent since 2020, and more than 87 percent of these ends in plea deals with reduced charges and sentencing.

Harsh penalties for these crimes are on the books. Yet, those severe consequences become meaningless when the justice system allows plea deals with drastically reduced sentences for sex offenders, and in the end, still leave victims with no protection.

Sexual predators do not make mistakes; they make very conscious choices. I have zero sympathy for pedophiles and sex offenders who selfishly choose to sexually violate another innocent human being. The hardships that they face as a result of their choices that they made should never supersede a victim's right to indefinite, lifelong protection. The priority should always be protecting victims of these crimes, not offenders who commit them.

In sixth grade at a place where I should have been safe, my elementary school, my teacher pulled me into the equipment room closet, he locked the door, and he molested me until he was sexually satisfied. Then, he shoved me out of the side door and sent me back to class as if nothing had happened. In a matter of minutes, my life changed forever by someone who was in a position of trust that was supposed to protect me. That was just the beginning of the sexual abuse and where my hell on Earth began; the hell that I am stuck in.

I could not protect myself then, but I can fight to protect myself, other innocent children, and every victim now. I ask that you fight to protect them, too.

Please lead the effort and pass this bill. No survivor should have to face their convicted abuser in court repeatedly. I will never stop fighting for victims and survivors because you still matter. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Kozak follows:]

Testimony Of Kayleigh Kozak
Namesake
Of
"Kayleigh's Law"

before the
US House Judiciary Subcommittee on
Crime and Federal Government
Surveillance

April 29th, 2026

Hello, Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in strong support of H.R. 8481, the Kayleigh's Law Act of 2026. My name is Kayleigh Kozak. I am a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, and I am the namesake behind Kayleigh's Law.

When I was a little girl, telling the truth cost me everything.

At twelve years old, a trusted teacher who was also my club soccer coach chose to sexually abuse me over a two-year period. In 2006, he was originally charged with eight counts of child sexual abuse in Maricopa County Superior Court ([Case No. CR2006-156684](#)). These included multiple counts of Molestation of a Child, Sexual Abuse, Attempted Sexual Conduct with a Minor, and Luring a Minor for Sexual Exploitation, most classified as Dangerous Crimes Against a Child under Arizona law, carrying potential sentences of 25 years to life.

Instead of facing full accountability, under the falsely proclaimed "tough on child predator" laws, he received a drastically reduced plea deal: conviction on two counts — Sexual Abuse and Luring a Minor for Sexual Exploitation, both Class 3 felonies. He served just nine months in jail and, at his request, was placed on two terms of lifetime probation in lieu of prison time. This sweetheart plea deal for him became a living hell for me. It is important to note that this experience is not unique. It is typical for these types of crimes to be pled down significantly, especially at the state and local level.

In January 2020, I received a phone call I never expected. My abuser had petitioned for early termination of his lifetime probation, and a court hearing was scheduled in just three weeks. Broken and overwhelmed, I had to do what no victim should ever have to do: stand in court and face my abuser again almost two decades later, pleading with the judge not to grant his motion. During that hearing, I was still unaware of how the system truly works for victims of these heinous crimes. When I asked what protection I would have if his probation was terminated, I was told "none." The only safeguard preventing him from contacting me was tied directly to the terms of his probation.

That experience exposed a critical flaw in our justice system: a victim's protection too often depends entirely on the perpetrator's post-conviction

conditions — specifically in Arizona, the terms of their probation — conditions that can end or change at any time. The judge denied his motion that day, but discovering this vulnerability ignited a fire in me I could not ignore. No victim should ever have to repeatedly face their convicted abuser in court simply to maintain basic safety because the terms of their conviction may change.

That was just the start of the battles I am still fighting long after my abuser's so-called "lifetime" sentence. Since that January 2020 hearing, my abuser's case revealed multiple gaps in the system. I was assured he would receive lifetime probation and public sex offender registration, only to learn "lifetime" did not mean permanent. The lifetime probation he was originally sentenced to offered me a sense of safety and protection.

I spearheaded Kayleigh's Law in Arizona to ensure victims would have permanent protection from the person convicted of harming them. No victim should have to endure this and fight for their protection when a perpetrator's status may change or end.

These firsthand experiences drove me to advocate and educate others about the realities victims face and how the system actually works. There is so much misconception and misunderstanding when it comes to how these crimes and the various associated charges, are handled.

Just two months ago, in February 2026, I found myself back in court again, for the same reason as in 2020. Only this time, I was educated and informed. This time was different. Prior to entering the hearing room, I witnessed my abuser served with a lifetime no-contact injunction under Kayleigh's Law (Appendix A). Meaning, regardless of what the judge ultimately decides about his probation and what conditions may change, one thing remains permanent: I now have lifelong protection.

The abuse itself was horrific. What no one prepares you for is the lifelong hell that follows. This isn't just my reality; this is the reality for so many victims across our nation, and we must do better.

The harm caused by sexual assault is not temporary. It is lifelong. The protections for those who have been sexually violated should be lifelong too.

There is little to no uniformity across states or federally pertaining to sex crime definitions, sex offender registry, probation requirements, or protective orders. If

the justice system is going to continue granting leniency to individuals convicted of sex offenses, fail to fully enforce the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) standards, and remove convicted offenders from probation and sex offender registries — which upon conviction are typically the conditions that prevent an offender from having contact with their victim — then the very least it should do is guarantee victims permanent protection from the person who was convicted of violating them. Victims everywhere, including those on tribal reservations, are worthy of this lifelong protection. Pursuing this law nationally has always been the goal.

It is important to understand protective orders and why the permanent protection under Kayleigh's Law is needed. A protective order — also referred to as a restraining order, injunction against harassment, criminal order of protection, or civil order of protection — is a court-issued legal tool designed to prohibit the defendant from having any contact with the petitioner. These orders vary significantly across the country in name, eligibility, scope, duration, and enforcement. This makes the protections they offer inconsistent.

Not all protective orders require a criminal conviction. Civil protective orders can often be obtained without an arrest or conviction. Criminal protective orders, tied to a conviction, carry stronger enforcement. However, in most states, even after a conviction for a heinous crime, these orders remain temporary. They often expire when probation, parole, or registration requirements end. Victims frequently must return to court and prove a new threat simply to maintain protection. This forces survivors to repeatedly confront their abusers and revictimizes them. It also creates a system where an already victimized individual needs to wait for additional pain and suffering before protection is extended.

While many states have updated laws on sex crimes and created enhancements for offenses, especially for crimes against children, the priority of offering victims' permanent protection has failed to follow suit. It is not the severity that serves as a deterrent, it is the certainty. Victims deserve the certainty of knowing that regardless of what conditions change for the offender, that this permanent protection will remain.

Kayleigh's Law (A.R.S. § 13-719) passed in the Arizona legislature with strong bipartisan support and was signed into law in 2021 by Governor Ducey (with provisions effective shortly thereafter). It empowers judges to issue lifetime no-

contact injunctions at sentencing for convictions involving dangerous, serious, violent, or specified sexual offenses. These orders prohibit all contact, cannot be appealed by the offender, and remain in effect for the perpetrator's natural lifetime, unless the victim chooses to lift them. Violations constitute new felonies. In Arizona, victims can also petition for this protection post-conviction.

In its first full year, more than 1,000 Arizona victims obtained this permanent protection (Appendix B). In Arizona it is referred to as a lifetime injunction under Kayleigh's Law, providing lasting peace of mind and reducing repeated court burdens. Arizona has expanded it further with recent legislation, such as SB1211 in 2026 for aggravated harassment.

Wisconsin enacted a version of Kayleigh's Law in 2023, signed by Governor Evers. As of 2026, a version is moving through the legislative process in California, though it has been amended to limit protection to 25 years. Other states such as Colorado, Indiana, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia have options for permanent protective orders, but they are often complex, limited, and difficult to obtain.

Arizona has set the gold standard with the most proactive, victim-focused approach in obtaining permanent protection from the individual who has been convicted of sexually violating them. For federal cases, Kayleigh's Law would create the permanent protection order, and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) would ensure that protection follows the victim across every state line in the United States. While VAWA provides the legal infrastructure for interstate enforcement, it does not actually create the orders, it only mandates that states honor what other states issue. This is why a permanent protection order through Kayleigh's Law is needed.

Sexual violence creates lifelong trauma. Approximately 70% of rape and sexual assault victims experience moderate to severe distress, higher than for any other crime.

This is a national crisis: Federal sex crimes have surged more than 62% since 2020, and more than 87% end in plea deals that reduce charges and sentences.

If the system is going to continue to allow leniency for sexual offenders, it must prioritize and guarantee permanent protection for the victims of these crimes.

Kayleigh's Law decouples victim protection from the convicted offender's changing status. The conviction itself would be what justifies a lifetime no-contact injunction. Arizona's model has proven effective and serves as the gold standard. It doesn't just extend protections for victims of convicted offenders, it empowers them.

Sexual predators don't make mistakes. They make conscious choices. Victims — when brave enough to speak up against their abusers — are at the mercy of the decisions made by the criminal justice system. I have zero sympathy for pedophiles and sex offenders. The hardships they face as a result of the disgusting choices they made should never supersede a victim's right to indefinite, lifelong protection from them.

Kayleigh's Law prioritizes protecting victims of these crimes from the extended trauma of continued exposure to the convicted offenders.

In sixth grade, at a place where I should have been safe — my elementary school — my teacher pulled me into the equipment room closet, locked the door, molested me until he was sexually satisfied. When he was finished, he shoved me out the side door and sent me back to class as if nothing had happened. In a matter of minutes, my entire life was changed forever by someone who was in a position of trust and was supposed to protect me. That was just the beginning of the sexual abuse and where my hell here on earth began, the hell that I am still stuck in today.

I could not protect myself then. But I can fight to protect myself, other innocent children, and every victim now. I ask that you fight to protect them too.

I urge this Subcommittee to lead and support H.R. 8481, the Kayleigh's Law Act of 2026, so that every survivor in America has the permanent protection that they deserve.

I will never stop fighting for victims and survivors, Because You Still Matter.

APPENDIX A (2026)

Clerk of the Superior Court
 *** Electronically Filed ***
 I. Osuna, Deputy
 2/24/2026 10:26:29 AM
 Filing ID 21530969

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA
 IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF MARICOPA

State of Arizona
 Plaintiff

CR2006-156684-001

JOSHUA JOEL JACOBSEN,
 Defendant.

**DECLARATION OF SERVICE OF
 ORDER FOR LIFETIME NO-CONTACT
 INJUNCTION (A.R.S. §13-719)**

Being duly qualified by law, I swear or certify that a copy of the *Order for Lifetime No-Contact Injunction* was personally served on the defendant, **JOSHUA JACOBSEN**, on this date: 2/20/26 at this time: 1015 HRS, at the following location:

175 W. Madison Phoenix, AZ 85003

I am a (check one): ☐ Registered process server ☒ Peace/correction/detention officer.

I declare under penalty of perjury the foregoing is true and correct.

[Signature] 2404 2/20/26
 Signature of Person Serving Document Date

Printed Name of Person Serving Document: D. P. S. C.

Agency: PINAL COUNTY S.O. ID # 2404

Defendant's last known address:

Joshua Joel Jacobsen

Glendale AZ 85308

DOB: 02/02/1975

SEX*	RACE*	DOB*	HT	WT
M	W	02/02/75		
EYES*	HAIR*			
DRIVER LICENSE # OR STATE IDENTIFICATION	STATE	EXP DATE		

RETURN DECLARATION OF SERVICE OF ORDER FOR LIFETIME NO-CONTACT INJUNCTION TO THE SUPERIOR COURT LISTED ABOVE

APPENDIX B (2025)

Lifetime Injunctions Issued or Granted

¹Total Number of Lifetime Injunctions Issued or GrantedAt Sentencing
(INI Total Docket Usage)

CY 2024

Year	Month	Lifetime Injunctions Issued or Granted
2024	January	84
2024	February	88
2024	March	84
2024	April	72
2024	May	69
2024	June	86
2024	July	63
2024	August	72
2024	September	64
2024	October	82
2024	November	68
2024	December	72
Total		904

Annual Breakdown (since A.R.S. 13-719 start date)

Year	Lifetime Injunctions Issued or Granted
9/24/2022 - 12/31/2022	152
2023	1004
2024	904
01/01/2025 - 01/31/2025	74
Total	2134

*A.R.S. 13-719 went live September 24th, 2022.

¹Total Number of Lifetime Injunctions Issued or GrantedRetroactively
(INR Total Docket Usage)

CY 2024

Year	Month	Lifetime Injunctions Issued or Granted
2024	January	0
2024	February	0
2024	March	6
2024	April	2
2024	May	2
2024	June	0
2024	July	5
2024	August	12
2024	September	3
2024	October	3
2024	November	2
2024	December	1
Total		36

Annual Breakdown (since A.R.S. 13-719 start date)

Year	Lifetime Injunctions Issued or Granted
9/24/2022 - 12/31/2022	15
2023	55
2024	36
01/01/2025 - 01/31/2025	8
Total	114

*A.R.S. 13-719 went live September 24th, 2022.

¹ The following data was run starting September 24th, 2022, through January 31, 2025 (Annual Breakdown). The CY 2024 data covers all of 2024. The total number was calculated by the unique Docket ID's. This means that there can be multiple unique Docket ID's for one case.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you. I regret to do this, but we are going to take a recess so we can go vote. They've called the votes. I have no idea how long that will last, and so, I would ask the witnesses to kind of—you may actually have time to wander around a little bit. Stay close so we can find you. When we do get back, we can reconvene. Thank you so very much. We're in recess.

[Recess. 12:06 p.m.]

Ms. LEE. [Presiding.] At this time, we'll reconvene the meeting of the Subcommittee. Welcome back, witnesses. We will now commence questioning by Members of Congress. We will go in five-minute increments, alternating back and forth from each side of the aisle. I will now recognize myself for five minutes.

Thank you all for being here today for the purpose of this hearing to discuss strengthening protections for victims of violent and sexual crimes. Thank you to each of our witnesses for your testimony and your insight. I want to especially thank Ms. Kayleigh Kozak. Your courage in coming here to share your story and transforming trauma into advocacy for other survivors is extraordinary. I want to personally thank you for your bravery and for your leadership.

Before coming to Congress, I served as both a Federal prosecutor and a judge, and I saw firsthand the devastating and lasting impact these crimes have on victims and on their families. Cases involving sexual abuse, exploitation, and violence are not something victims can simply move on from when a sentence is handed down. The trauma, fear, and emotional toll often last a lifetime, and our justice system should recognize that reality. Too often victims are forced to repeatedly return to court, relive painful experiences, and continue proving they deserve protection from the very individuals who harmed them.

Victims should not have to carry the burden of navigating gaps in the system to simply feel safe. My hope for today's hearing is that we better understand where these gaps still exist, what protections are truly making a difference for survivors, and what Congress can do to build a more victim-centered justice system that provides safety, accountability, and peace of mind for survivors across the country.

Ms. Wright, I would like to begin with you. Florida, unfortunately, sees a high volume of crimes involving exploitation and trafficking. We also have a highly transient population. One concern I have is whether protective orders truly follow offenders in meaningful and enforceable ways when someone relocates. From your perspective, are there gaps today in how long-term protective orders are entered into national databases, recognized across jurisdictions, or communicated to local law enforcement agencies?

Ms. WRIGHT. Thank you for the question. In short, the answer is yes. There are gaps. If an offender is moving to a different jurisdiction, under State law, those orders may only pertain to just that State conviction. A Federal bill, like the one proposed, 8481, like Kayleigh's Law, the Federal version of this, would close that hole. It would fill in that gap because it's having a Federal jurisdiction, which means no matter where the offender goes, no matter where the victim goes, that protective order is going to apply to the offender still, and that victim will still be protected.

Also, it's focusing on the criminal sentencing aspect as opposed to family law which is unique to the States. Also, that's a gap that the Federal law would have to do differently, because State by State, the family law also differs.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. Ms. Kozak, from your perspective, how important is it that our laws recognize the long-term reality of trauma and provide victims with lasting certainty and protection, not just during prosecution, but years afterwards as survivors are moving forward with their lives?

Ms. KOZAK. Thank you so much for that question. It is incredibly important that it's recognized that the effects from sexual violence, especially for children, any victim of any age do last a lifetime. Just because defendants' and offenders' situation may change—whether it be their registry requirements or their sex offender registry requirements, that does not lessen the severity of what happened to a victim. It will go with them for the rest of their life.

Ms. LEE. One of the most striking parts of your story is that the court required evidence of a recent encounter with your abuser before considering additional protections. From a survivor's perspective, how retraumatizing is it to essentially have to wait for another frightening interaction before the system will act?

Ms. KOZAK. Thank you for that question, too. When we are going through the judicial process, we can be proactive or reactive. This law allows for a proactive order of protection to be in place that lasts a lifetime.

When I got the phone call in 2020 notifying me that I had to go back to court to fight for my abuser to stay on probation—and learn that it was all or nothing, and that I wouldn't have protection if he got off, I couldn't wrap my head around that reality. That is the reality that so many victims are in. The crime itself should be sufficient enough to give a very natural life protection. They have already shown that they have no respect for boundaries, and that they will go to great lengths to sexually violate someone. That order of protection should stay in place.

Ms. LEE. You have now worked with legislatures across the country since Arizona passed Kayleigh's Law. Have you heard from survivors who felt more willing to come forward or cooperate with prosecutors or seek justice because they knew the prospect of stronger long-term protection was available?

Ms. KOZAK. Thank you for that question. I've heard from thousands of survivors across the Nation who are hopeful that this type of protective order can be in place for them and for victims. Specifically in Arizona, there's been over 3,000 victims now that have gotten this type of protection order put in place. The comfort that this gives them and knowing that they can actually move on with their life and not have it interrupted because a perpetrator has decided that they want things to change, has changed the trajectory of their lives immensely. It allows them to go on healing. It takes control away from the abuser who has continued to file things and drive change in their life. The victim now has protection, and they can move on.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. I now recognize the Ranking Member, the Representative from Georgia, Ms. McBath, for five minutes.

Ms. MCBATH. Thank you so much, Chair. Ms. Wright, do Federal courts currently issue protective orders or restraining orders of any kind to victims of crime that are not connected to either pretrial release or criminal sentence?

Ms. WRIGHT. Thank you for the question, Ranking Member McBeth. The most comparable analogue right now to a restraining order in the Federal system that is not a condition of pretrial release or supervised release is going to be sex offender registration. So, no.

Ms. MCBATH. OK. Thank you. Statutes that allow for permanent orders of protection have been adopted in several States, including Arizona, Maryland, Wisconsin, Colorado, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. Most States with a law like Kayleigh's Law provide some way for victims or the courts to review, modify, or terminate orders. It's often up to the victim. Is that right, Ms. Kozak?

Ms. KOZAK. Thank you. For clarification, yes, the victim can petition to have the order terminated or ended early, if they wish.

Ms. MCBATH. OK. The proposed Federal version of Kayleigh's Law—it's actually different. It would prevent the victim from having the order terminated or suspended unless the abuser's conviction was the subject of a pardon or a commutation.

Ms. JORDAN, should we limit victim autonomy in this bill in this way?

Ms. JORDAN. Thank you for that question. We should not limit victim autonomy in that way. One of the critical things that happens to survivors of any crime, but particularly of sexual assault, is that they have had control taken away from them by that crime. Part of our goal in giving a survivor justice is to empower them.

There are many different stories. There are many different paths that survivors take. Some wish to speak with the offender. Most know their offender. Sometimes they want to have an order modified to allow for some sort of contact. It is not our place to judge the reasons that survivors may have for wanting to modify or tailor a permanent order. We should give them the right to do that. That is why it is critical that any legislation that this body passes includes the ability for a survivor to decide to modify something.

Ms. MCBATH. Then, should an action by the President determine what a victim is allowed to do under the proposed statute.

Ms. JORDAN. I am sorry, I didn't hear your question.

Ms. MCBATH. Should an action by the President determine what a victim is allowed to do under this proposed statute?

Ms. JORDAN. No, I would suggest that really we should allow the victim to have the autonomy to make that decision, not an act by the President.

Ms. MCBATH. Thank you. Ms. Kozak, who knows more about the needs and desires of a victim than a victim?

Ms. KOZAK. A victim.

Ms. MCBATH. Ms. Wright.

Ms. WRIGHT. A victim.

Ms. MCBATH. Ms. Jordan?

Ms. JORDAN. A victim.

Ms. MCBATH. Senator Valladares?

Senator VALLADARES. A victim.

Ms. MCBATH. Thank you. We know that sexual and domestic abusers oftentimes stalk their victims, which can leave victims to seek restraining or protective orders against their abusers. Although stalking is a covered offense in the Arizona version of Kayleigh's Law, stalking is not a covered offense in the Federal version of the bill.

Ms. Kozak, why did you find it necessary to include stalking as a covered offense in the Arizona version of your bill? Should stalking be covered in the Federal version of your bill?

Ms. KOZAK. Thank you for that question. Stalking is a very serious crime and a very real thing that we see throughout the Nation. Stalking was not originally included in the Arizona bill. It started as mostly heinous sex crimes, and there were amendments a couple years later. With this bill, we really focus on sex crimes to narrow. With the conversation of future amendments to add stalking, stalking is a very serious crime, and I absolutely believe that it should be included as one of the statutes that would make it be available to pursue a permanent order of protection under Federal law.

Ms. MCBATH. OK. Ms. Kozak, you decided to pursue the creation of permanent injunctions that would exist and could be in force separate and apart from any criminal sentence, correct.

Ms. KOZAK. Can you repeat that question?

Ms. MCBATH. OK. You decided to pursue the creation of permanent injunctions that would exist and could be enforced separately and apart from any criminal sentence. Am I right?

Ms. KOZAK. This would only be applicable to criminal sentences.

Ms. MCBATH. OK. I just want you to know, I commend your effort and your resolve. I am really very, very grateful to you. It appears that the Federal version of your bill would require a sentencing court to include a permanent injunction in any sentence imposed. Is that right?

Ms. KOZAK. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. MCBATH. That injunction would remain in effect for the life of the defendant; correct?

Ms. KOZAK. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. MCBATH. Ms. Wright, you note in—oh, sorry. I am out of time. Thank you.

Ms. LEE. I now recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Kiley, for five minutes.

Mr. KILEY. Thank you, Madam Chair. Senator Valladares, thank you for being with us today. I understand you introduced a bill in the State legislature that would have allowed victims of certain sex crimes to obtain a permanent restraining order against the perpetrator. Is that right?

Senator VALLADARES. Yes.

Mr. KILEY. What happened to this bill?

Senator VALLADARES. Last year when we introduced Kayleigh's Law, it had a broader framework that would allow for certain violent crimes and sexual crimes. It would give a judge discretion to issue a permanent injunction. The bill was immediately killed in public safety and—

Mr. KILEY. It was killed?

Senator VALLADARES. It was killed in public safety.

Mr. KILEY. Why?

Senator VALLADARES. I don't understand. When as we've heard here today, the trauma and retraumatization of victims is real. Having to return to court in California every three to seven years to seek extra protections is unacceptable.

Mr. KILEY. That's amazing. That's what they wanted—your colleagues in the California State legislature wanted—they wanted to force victims to have to come keep getting a restraining order every 3–7 years?

Senator VALLADARES. Unfortunately, the criminal justice reforms in California, and law after law that have been passed and signed by our Governor have emboldened criminals and taken every opportunity to create more barriers for survivors, which we saw in the public safety vote last year.

Mr. KILEY. Now, that's just unfathomable to me. It seems like if there's just one thing they should garner unanimous bipartisan support, it's saying that victims of these heinous crimes should be able to feel safe from their perpetrators, and certainly shouldn't have to confront them and re-experience the trauma on a regular basis; right?

Senator VALLADARES. Absolutely.

Mr. KILEY. This is especially important because in California, as you know very well, a lot of these folks get released from prison a lot earlier than they should. We had just a couple pretty recent cases in California where you had a serial child molester named David Funston who assaulted—kidnapped, molested multiple young children as young as 3 years old; would lure them to his car with candy; was sentenced to three life sentences. The judge called him the monster that parents fear most. He was granted parole; granted early release by the parole board. You are familiar with this case?

Senator VALLADARES. Yes, unfortunately, that's not the only case. Just this year I can recall three different instances where predators who violently raped and assaulted children—children as young as three years old—were sentenced to multiple life sentences, never really finished those sentences because the State of California and the parole board granted them early release. It just goes to show how important Kayleigh's Law is because there is no guarantee in California that a life sentence will be served. The victims that expect that justice when sentence is handed down are essentially slapped in the face when these violent criminals are released back into our communities.

Mr. KILEY. That's such an important point. This law is more important in California than basically anywhere. There is a Southern case, you mentioned several others, this Gregory Vogelsang was sentenced to 355 years in prison for victimizing five children in Citrus Heights, was recommended for release in California because of this elderly parole law, which I believe applies to anyone over 50; right?

Senator VALLADARES. Yes, my husband is not happy. He is a little bit over 50. Fifty is not elderly. When you see some of the parole hearings, this is what is graphic and horrific. A lot of these criminals still admit in parole hearings today or late last year that they're still attracted to children, yet the parole board is releasing them.

Mr. KILEY. I remember that in this case or one of these cases. It was the Funston case, I think. That was actually in the record, and they still recommended release. Again, 360-some years, you're sentenced to three life sentences. They're being released from prison early under this law.

Then, because the legislature has refused to pass your bill victims who had a restraining order in cases like this, suddenly they hear that the person who victimized them is out of prison. Whereas they might have thought, three life sentences, I might not have to worry about this. They're out of prison. Then, they have to keep going to court to get a restraining order. That seems pretty crazy to me.

I understand you've reintroduced your bill. Maybe there's a path toward getting the victim some relief at least?

Senator VALLADARES. Yes, this year we reintroduced Kayleigh's Law. It is very narrowed. Unfortunately, there was no appetite with my colleagues across the aisle to issue a lifetime injunction. We negotiated 25 years, and 25 years for convictions of sexually assaulting children, so this is very narrow. It's also very important to recognize that in my version of the bill in California, this gives a judge discretion. It requires the court to look at the seriousness of the matter, and to make this decision based on the facts of the case and the likelihood of the individual reoffending.

Mr. KILEY. Well, it's a good first step. I thank you for your efforts. I am calling on everyone in Sacramento, including the Governor, to really be on the side of victims when it comes to this issue. I yield back.

Ms. LEE. I now recognize the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Knott, for five minutes.

Mr. KNOTT. Thank you, Madam Chair. To the witnesses here, thank you so much for being here. I want to start with you, Ms. Kozak. If you can just refresh the memory of people watching, when did you suffer your abuse?

Ms. KOZAK. I was sexually abused my sixth and seventh grade year, when I was just 12 and 13 years old by my—

Mr. KNOTT. Before you were a teenager?

Ms. KOZAK. Yes.

Mr. KNOTT. Excuse this question, but how old are you now?

Ms. KOZAK. Thirty-four.

Mr. KNOTT. Thirty-four. In any way, shape, or form, has that trauma that you went through as a young lady, has it gone away, has it been cared for, or has it been an ongoing presence in your life?

Ms. KOZAK. It's been ongoing. I did my best to pick up and move on with my life. In 2020, it changed when my abuser decided once again he wanted things to change. It's been all about what he wants.

Mr. KNOTT. Right.

Ms. KOZAK. What he decides through the court.

Mr. KNOTT. This just again for clarity and context, he was convicted, correct?

Ms. KOZAK. Yes, he was convicted.

Mr. KNOTT. In your experience, in your familiarity with this case, are you a lone example of his abuse?

Ms. KOZAK. My case, specifically, or as a victim?

Mr. KNOTT. In terms of your familiarity with what went on at that school when you were a student there, was there other instances of abuse that you're familiar with?

Ms. KOZAK. I am the only known documented victim. That does not mean that I am the only victim.

Mr. KNOTT. Sure. In terms of this particular perpetrator, he was convicted, he was given a very light sentence. In any way, shape, or form, do you believe that he has been reformed from his previous crimes?

Ms. KOZAK. Thank you for that question. I do not believe that sex offenders can be rehabilitated.

Mr. KNOTT. Why.

Ms. KOZAK. Well, because is there enough therapy that I can give anybody in this room to be sexually attracted to children? It's sexual preference. They may learn how to control their urges, but they cannot be rehabilitated into not being sexually attracted to children.

Mr. KNOTT. In regards to this particular individual who committed crimes against you, has he been reformed?

Ms. KOZAK. No.

Mr. KNOTT. How do you know that?

Ms. KOZAK. Because I am the victim. I receive all the documents. I see his test. I see the summaries. I see the results of the things that he does and his polygraphs and his psychosexuals. So, no.

Mr. KNOTT. Have there been other instances of either admitted or documented inappropriate sexual attraction or action that he has taken?

Mr. KNOTT. Yes, he was removed from his home in 2015 for continuous violations. He was almost put back in prison, revoked. Instead, they removed him from his home. The reasons were because he was continuously lying, and he was being sexually aroused by his own children.

Mr. KNOTT. Unbelievable. As a lawmaker, I have grave concerns that someone like that is candidly still alive. That the use of the death penalty for someone who does that to a child and continues to do this, we need to have serious discussions about that. At a minimum, they should be in jail for life. Again, this is someone who is not rumored, he has been convicted. He has documented instances of returning to this cesspool. The State is making you defend the protective order that you should be able to hold for the rest of your life. Isn't that correct?

Ms. KOZAK. Yes.

Mr. KNOTT. In regard to the cost financially to you, how much have you—just ballpark estimate—how much have you had to spend to keep that evil man away from you?

Ms. KOZAK. An immense amount of money.

Mr. KNOTT. Are we talking about \$10,000? \$100,000? Over \$1 million?

Ms. KOZAK. Probably the latter.

Mr. KNOTT. Unbelievable. In regard to your life, ma'am, how have you been able to separate out what you went through to where you want to go?

Ms. KOZAK. I never thought I would have to continue fighting the man who was convicted for sexually abusing me as a child, but if this is what I'm going through, then how many others? I owe it to every victim to stand and fight for them, because no one should have to endure this.

Mr. KNOTT. Right.

Ms. KOZAK. When I was told a lifetime, I thought he would be on a lifetime sentence. I was not told the truth. When I found out that he was not on the sex offender registry, the public sex offender registry, due to a risk assessment, when he was convicted of committing a dangerous crime against a child, I could not believe it. I have really found my voice and fought for justice.

Mr. KNOTT. How does empowering these predators, what does that do to victims' likelihood of coming forward?

Ms. KOZAK. Why would they?

Mr. KNOTT. Right.

Ms. KOZAK. It's horrific.

Mr. KNOTT. If you had to do it over again, would you have come forward?

Ms. KOZAK. If I knew then what I know now, no.

Mr. KNOTT. What a failure. Well, thank you for coming forward today. We are in your debt, and our toleration of this type of person is a grave concern of mine. I yield back.

Mr. BIGGS. [Presiding.] The gentleman yields. I have several UCs. First, is this: "Kayleigh's Law helps more than 1,000 Arizona crime victims."

Second, "Officials who claim to support victim rights go on offensive to silence outspoken victim advocate."

Mr. BIGGS. Valladares—do you say Valladares?

Senator VALLADARES. Valladares or Valladares, whichever.

Mr. BIGGS. Valladares, OK. Third, "Valladares introduces Kayleigh's Law bill to strengthen protections for crime victims."

Fourth, "Judge denies Liberty District's motion to dismiss decades-old sexual abuse negligence case."

Fifth, "Prosecutors want Idaho killer barred from contacting victim's families for nearly a century."

Sixth, "Arizona Senator celebrates legal triumph as court upholds strict sex offender law."

Mr. BIGGS. Without objection. I now will recognize Ms. McBath for five minutes.

Ms. MCBATH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. To kind of pick up where we left off, Ms. Wright, you note in your testimony that the Federal proposal would tie the no-contact order to the criminal sentence, correct?

Ms. WRIGHT. Correct.

Ms. MCBATH. Ms. Kozak, is that not exactly what she wanted to avoid in Arizona when you fought for your bill's passage?

Ms. KOZAK. I'm so sorry. Can you please repeat the original?

Ms. MCBATH. Sure.

Ms. KOZAK. Thank you so much.

Ms. MCBATH. Sure. In your testimony that the Federal—you wrote in your testimony that—I'm sorry, in Ms. Wright's testimony, she wrote that, "the Federal proposal would tie the no-contact order to the criminal sentence." She says, "correct."

OK. My question to you is, is that not exactly what you wanted to avoid in Arizona when you were actually fighting for your bill's passage?

Ms. KOZAK. In Arizona when we were fighting for this, what makes Kayleigh's Law the gold standard is that it would be implemented at the time of sentencing. Eliminating any future court hearings or having to justify that you may be in danger. The goal is to have it served at the time of sentencing, then everyone knows that it's intact.

In Arizona, it is retroactive, and so, there are thousands of victims who have petitioned and received the no-contact—the lifetime injunction is what it's called in Arizona—postconviction.

Ms. MCBATH. OK. Thank you. Then, we are here today because we know that protective orders are a tool that could help some victims and survivors obtain peace of mind. Victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence and abuse, and other violent felonies require comprehensive support because they have a wide range of needs that span safety, health, legal, financial—as you have expressed—and long-term recovery.

Ms. JORDAN, beyond protective orders, what other care and services and support are necessary to help survivors and victims of sexual and domestic violence?

Ms. JORDAN. Thank you for that question. It is hugely important, because survivors all have different needs, and we need to meet them where they are. Some need housing, others need legal services. The bill before you today is exceptionally complicated. Enforcing something with a contempt of court, you would need a lawyer to help with that.

Also, consider that if you were, for instance, the mom of a child who was sexually abused by your husband, by a stepfather, you wouldn't just need a criminal prosecution of that offender; you would also need a divorce; you would also need a custody order; you would also need clinical attention; you would need therapy; you would need support; and you would need your rape crisis centers that are available throughout the country.

Listening to some of the testimony here today, I'm reminded that one of the important things that Congress can do is to place a condition on funding. You could say that we need to have Kayleigh's Law at the local level where most sex crimes prosecutions occur, and those States, they would respond to that sort of mandate. It's not going to make a difference unless the money starts getting into the field.

Right now, again, we are facing huge barriers: No applications being released, awards not being announced, and some awards being rescinded. That tool of attaching funding to a condition like creating Kayleigh's Law at the local level; it is a huge tool that Congress has, but only if the money is flowing and only if those grants are working.

Ms. MCBATH. Ms. Jordan—this is last question that I have—an abusive partner's access to a firearm greatly increases the danger faced by victims of domestic violence, making it five times more likely that a woman will be killed and also creating a grave risk to her children. Are extreme risk protection orders, would you consider them a tool in addition to traditional protective orders that

should be available to everyone, any woman, anyone facing domestic abuse no matter where they live?

Ms. JORDAN. Absolutely. That is a critical tool. It is a critical tool for survivors of intimate partner violence. Guns, remember, increase lethality in all crimes, including sexual violence, and including robberies. ERPOs are a fundamental tool to help get the guns out of people who may use them against the people who are here in America. Thank you for your leadership on that issue. It is something that should be considered side by side with this law.

Ms. MCBATH. Thank you very much. I'm out of time.

Mr. BIGGS. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Florida, Ms. Lee.

Ms. LEE. Senator Valladares, you testified earlier about California ultimately moving toward a 25-year framework rather than lifetime protections. From a legislative negotiation standpoint, was that compromise driven more by constitutional concerns, enforcement concerns, or political opposition to the concept of lifetime victim protections themselves?

Senator VALLADARES. Yes. I'm happy that our bill is still moving through the legislative process, not in a protective order—lifeline protective order form. To quote the Chair of the Public Safety Committee, "we have a fundamental difference of opinion on lifetime orders."

Ms. LEE. It sounds like the opponents of lifetime protections were primarily framing their objections through the lens of offender rehabilitation. Tell me how you perceive balancing rehabilitation arguments against the ongoing public safety and psychological needs of victims who may carry trauma for life?

Senator VALLADARES. Well, I think that the truth is for victims and for survivors, their trauma does not expire. It does not end. From my perspective, Kayleigh's Law gets us back to where we should have never left, which is protecting and prioritizing the rights of victims and the trauma of victims. That's the balance. California has yet to get there yet, but we're continuing to work on it.

Ms. LEE. Ms. Wright, as Congress looks at whether laws like Kayleigh's Law are working, should we be measuring success not just by recidivism or convictions statistics, but also by whether victims actually feel safer, are more willing to come forward and cooperate with law enforcement, experience fewer repeat contacts from offenders, and are able to move on with their lives instead of repeatedly returning to court?

Ms. WRIGHT. That is an excellent question, and it's both, Congresswoman. That's because on one hand we need to analyze the data and information that State agencies are providing to States, and then also if this law—or this bill were become law, how DOJ is reporting those kind of statistics for Congress.

However, to take a step back from the sterility of lawmaking and sometimes being in a courtroom, the criminal justice system is not based just on data and numbers; it's based on people and stories. It would be important for Congress to be reminded when we're looking at this, yes, maybe the recidivism data would show that these are—this would be a positive policy. Maybe it wouldn't. To

say that this one specific bill would be the silver bullet for crime numbers going down would be impossible.

For instance, when the FBI released its crime data earlier this year, we all saw that crime numbers are decreasing. That is a hollow reprieve for people who in big cities are still feeling unsafe.

It is imperative that the crime data is kind of stagnant, but we have to remember that a victim feeling that they have someone in their corner, that they are part of the conversation, and that someone is looking out for their interest, that in and of itself is the law working too.

Ms. LEE. Along those lines, is it your view that we should also take into consideration things like victim stability outcomes, such as whether survivors are better able to maintain employment, housing, or schooling?

Ms. WRIGHT. That's an important consideration definitely, because survivors are impacted by this and they are seeking reprieve from their trauma. It's not just a conversation for just the defendant on how that person is being rehabilitated and reintegrated into society. The criminal justice system is a trying process that is not quickly done, criminal litigation and then the sentencing and then the post-incarceration conversations, and then as Ms. Kozak was describing, having to be heralded back into court decades after the crime itself. Yes, that's an excellent point.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Mr. BIGGS. The gentlelady yields. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Knott.

Mr. KNOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator VALLADARES, I want to talk to you briefly about kind of picking up where you were with Mr. Kiley. In terms of, you stated there was no appetite with your colleagues across the aisle to give a lifetime injunction or a lifetime ban from predators to have access to the victims. Again, just to highlight the situation here, we're not talking about mere accusers. These are people, like Ms. Kozak, whose perpetrator was convicted beyond a reasonable doubt for heinous crimes. What's the reason behind, I would say, this artificial compassion?

Senator VALLADARES. It's important to clarify that in the California version of Kayleigh's Law it is tailored to crimes or convictions of sexual assault on minors.

Mr. KNOTT. Right.

Senator VALLADARES. This is the only crime in the bill, and as I mentioned earlier, my colleagues have no appetite to offer permanent injunction for those victims. If you think about some of the cases we heard earlier where a victim is brutally raped at 3–5 years old, under the current law, 4–7 years later, they could still be a child and having to face their predator once again just to maintain safety. I simply cannot relate to anyone who doesn't agree or have compassion for someone being—

Mr. KNOTT. A three-year-old. A three-year-old. How that's excused with anything less than a life sentence and up to a death penalty, I can't sympathize with that. I can't understand that. It's part of a broader trend, as you well know. In California, as you're well aware, there was a bill that was blocked that would have

made it heightened—there would be heightened penalties for efforts to purchase sex from 16–17-year-olds.

In the State of Washington, there was a bill to reduce penalties for sex offenders who do not register on the public list as required by law. In Illinois, there was an effort to remove buffers that convicted sex offenders must abide by as it relates to daycare, as it relates to playgrounds, as it relates to schools. Also, in Illinois, there was an effort to lower penalties for people who did not register on the sex offender list, and there was an effort to make it a misdemeanor as opposed to a felony.

Then, here in the U.S. Senate, there was an effort to block a bill that would have strengthened penalties for possessing and producing child pornography. Why is it that there are these efforts to reduce the disincentive of strong penalties for sex predators as it relates to children?

Senator VALLADARES. Unfortunately, in the California legislature, I feel like we have a procriminal sentiment and body that likes to pass these bills, contrary to the belief of the California people, who overwhelmingly have asked legislators to hold criminals accountable in a variety of ways. One thing I'll also point out is that that bill you talked about earlier that would omit 16–17-year-olds started as a bill that would increase penalties for buying sex with any minor, and that was rejected from the public safety committee.

Mr. KNOTT. Unbelievable.

Senator VALLADARES. Public outcry required them to take it up again.

Mr. KNOTT. Purchasing sex from a minor, that's astounding. That doesn't even begin to touch what Members of the Left want to put before children in school as young as kindergarten. It's just sexually explicit material. Even in my home State of North Carolina, they are going to the bat to defend their right to put this type of material in front of children.

Ms. Wright, I have a question for you. In regard to the criticism or the question about this particular law, do you believe that there's any issues with States' rights, federalism issues and so forth? Why or why not?

Ms. WRIGHT. No, I don't believe that this bill infringes on any State rights for a few reasons:

First, there is language in the bill toward the end basically separating out this shall not impact any State laws on this issue, like the Kayleigh's Laws that are being implemented across the country.

Second, the way that the bill is written, it does not try to create a new family law system in the Federal jurisdiction. It is staying squarely within the sentencing parameters of 18 U.S.C.

Mr. KNOTT. Yes.

Ms. WRIGHT. In fact, the contempt of court penalty attributed to a defendant violating the no-contact condition of his sentencing is 18 U.S.C. I don't believe that there's any federalism concerns here.

Mr. KNOTT. OK. Last, Ms. Jordan, in your experience, is there room for Federal programs to be involved with victim protection, or should it be more of a grant system? What's the optimum solution as you see it in your experience?

Ms. JORDAN. Oh, absolutely. We should have Federal protection. However, you would be remiss if you didn't take advantage of the tool that you have here in Congress that affects State crimes, because the reality is very few sex crimes are prosecuted at the Federal level.

Mr. KNOTT. Right.

Ms. JORDAN. It is almost exclusively a matter of a State jurisdiction. Absolutely, give those Federal crime victims these rights, but don't neglect our State crime victims, and use the tools that you have.

Mr. KNOTT. Wonderful. Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Mr. BIGGS. The gentleman yields back.

I now recognize myself for my first round of questions. I apologize. I got caught on the floor and couldn't get off until just now, again, I've read all your testimony. I want you to know, I've read all your testimony, and so I'm going to cover just a few aspects of this and try to address some of the issues that have arisen that have been mentioned here.

If you turn to the language of the bill itself and you looked at line six of page 2, it says,

In the case of any defendant convicted of a covered defense, the court shall, on motion of the government or victim, include in any sentence imposed.

An issue has been raised as to whether that means that the judge is going to actually condition that, and so when the sentence is completed, do you have a conflict.

That we might want to consider putting in language something like this:

The court shall, on motion of the government or victim, issue at the time of sentence on that defendant an order prohibiting contact with the victim.

It would be like a separate lifetime order, and that's what we really want. We don't want necessarily to get confused about that gets taken up. Then, the other is that—and then you'd have to correct on line 11–13, that line too.

Anyway, the next point would be, on the contempt of court issue, because it does stay, as Ms. Wright says, that keeps it in 18 U.S.C.

I'm going to ask, Ms. Jordan, can you tell me what that is in your mind, what that process—I know what I think the process would look like. I want to hear what you think the process would look like.

Ms. JORDAN. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for that question. I think the difficulty, and my concern about this is, if you have a separate order, a protective order that either is part of the family law or part of, for instance, we have a peace order as part of courts and judicial proceedings, the law officer on the street who encounters an offender outside the home of a crime victim has the immediate ability to arrest that person.

That is not the case for contempt of court. Contempt of court would require that the officer file a petition, that it would go to court, that the judge review it. It's much more similar to a violation of probation. My suggestion would be that this body look at something that fits into the existing framework of law enforcement who can quickly and immediately respond when a victim is being threatened by an offender.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you for that, and I agree. There's some other nuances that we might consider, but that's beyond the scope of this hearing. We definitely want that person who's violating the order of protection to be immediately removed and detained and—in other words, arrested. We want them arrested and taken out.

Mr. KNOTT. Will the Chair yield?

Mr. BIGGS. Yes.

Mr. KNOTT. I have a logistics question in that same vein for Ms. Wright. It says, in general,

In the case of any defendant convicted of a covered offense, the court shall, on motion of the government or a victim, include in any sentence imposed on that defendant an order prohibiting contact with a victim.

Do you think we need to splice that out to make sure that the order lasts longer than the sentence imposed?

Ms. WRIGHT. Yes, because—

Mr. KNOTT. How would you recommend—because logistically—

Mr. BIGGS. Did you not just listen to my excellent, erudite language that I had drafted?

Mr. KNOTT. As your juror, I need more clarification.

Mr. BIGGS. OK.

Mr. KNOTT. How would you recommend we amend that, if we do so or choose to do so, to make it crystal clear?

Ms. WRIGHT. Well, Chair Biggs had an excellent suggestion, if I may.

Mr. BIGGS. Thank you.

Ms. WRIGHT. No, I think just some clarity in the language. For instance, truly, like Chair Biggs mentioned, striking the language “include in any sentence,” and instead say, “issue at the time of sentence.” Then, also, I'm not a legislative drafter, but that saying that the covered offense does not preclude the term of—the covered offense sentence does not preclude the order being longer than that.

Mr. KNOTT. Yes.

Ms. WRIGHT. I just think clarity in writing really—

Mr. KNOTT. Because you do need to—we need to separate the order from the sentence imposed.

Ms. WRIGHT. Yes. Which, the way I read this, it is; but I could see how an OK defense attorney would disagree.

Mr. KNOTT. OK. All right. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. BIGGS. Thanks. I like the secondary sentence there, clause there, because then you have the belt-and-suspenders approach to it, right?

Mr. KNOTT. Right.

Mr. BIGGS. Let's see here. Just to remind people, in Arizona, if you violate the order of protection, it's a class one misdemeanor, which means you can be sentenced up to six months in jail, three years' probation. It's unsupervised probation, which is a problem, but—and then a fine of, I want to say, it's \$2,500–\$3,500. Is that right, Ms. Kozak?

Ms. KOZAK. Yes.

Mr. BIGGS. OK. We might want to look at that because of its vis-à-vis civil contempt. You're really looking at a reason to have an arrest and removal and turning it into a crime might do that, so we ought to look at that too.

Then, I want to remind everybody what we're talking about here in this. I went down and I listed every one of these offenses that are covered—that are considered covered offenses under the law, and they're all in Title 18, but I will just go through them: Sex trafficking, aggravated sex abuse, sex abuse, sex abuse of a minor—and then I can't read the rest of my writing—oh, no, ward or person in custody, so any of that; abusive sex contact in prison; an offense resulting in death while committing any of those offenses that I just iterated; sexual exploitation of minors; selling or buying children; CSAM or implementing CSAM in interstate commerce; other civil forfeitures related to these; civil remedies for child exploitation; and CSAM importing to the United States or transporting across State lines for illegal sex or prostitution, or of minor children, or of internet material under the age 16 soliciting sex or child porn, moving that across.

We've tried to cover Representative Hamadeh tried to cover as much of the code as he possibly can. It's very good. We might want just make a few of those amendments so we can nail that down.

Then, I want to bring up just a couple things. I want to give you the crime victims fund—victims of crimes fund, I'm going to put this into the record, but just to give you an idea. In 2017, because of a court settlement, it was over \$13 billion, and then in 2018, it was \$9 billion, and these are all Trump years. In Trump in 2019, \$6.4 billion, then \$4.4 billion. Then, under President Biden it went to \$3.1 billion, \$2.6—excuse me, \$1.5 billion, \$1 billion, and \$2 billion. Then, in last two years, under this President, more than \$3.5 billion per year. You see that it just kind of flows all over, and it doesn't matter.

The other issue that was raised in an opening statement that was given was that—regarding a number of cases that are dismissed or declined for prosecution in D.C. Under the Biden Administration, they declined more than 50 percent—56 percent of all cases were declined for prosecution in D.C. I just raise that because I don't want this to be a partisan issue. I think this is something that we should all agree on, and this is something that we all need to take steps on and move forward on.

Your testimony here today was very important, and I appreciate all of you being here, and I thank you. Thanks for excusing me for a little bit during this hearing, and God bless all of you for having the courage to come on this very important issue.

Specifically, yes, we want to thank Kayleigh for coming forward as a victim, to have the courage to come here, and not just be here but all over the country trying to fix something that is really disgusting. I share Mr. Knott's frustration.

We are adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:54 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

All materials submitted for the record by Members of the Subcommittee on Crime and Federal Government Surveillance can be found at: <https://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=119240>.