



IT'S TIME TO TAKE ACTION: To Prevent Violence Against Women On College Campuses

We've identified the problem, know there are workable solutions, and now it's time to take action (P-S-A)! They say many hands make for light work, but the action usually starts with just one pair of hands – YOURS – and grows from there.

STEP 1: KNOW THE ISSUE

Under United States federal law, most notably [Title IX](#) and the [Clery Act](#), students are guaranteed a right to education free from sexual violence and harassment. In the case such violence *does* occur, colleges and universities are required to respond to the various needs of survivors, which sometimes include academic, housing, and employment accommodations, as well as counseling and other support services. Campuses must have grievance procedures in place for survivors to take disciplinary action against their assailants. And every school must have a Title IX Coordinator who manages complaints. The Coordinator's contact information should be publicly accessible on the school's website.

What rights do victims of campus sexual violence have?

Colleges must publish the victim's rights and the college's responsibilities:

- Information on obtaining orders of protection, no contact orders, etc.
- Information on how the college will protect the confidentiality of the victim.
- Written notification of available services for mental health, victim advocacy, legal assistance, and other available community resources.
- Written notification about a victims' right to change academic, living, transportation, or work situations *even if they do not formally report a crime*.
- Written explanation of a student or employee's rights and options, *regardless of whether the crime took place on campus or off campus*.

Colleges must publish the procedures for reporting sexual violence:

- Information on how to preserve evidence of the crime.
- Information on to whom and how to formally report the incident.
- *The right to decline formally reporting to authorities.*

STEP 2: MOBILIZE AND PLAN – you now have an issue that you're passionate about. Find others who are as passionate as you, and develop an action plan.

- Do your homework – make sure you understand [Title IX](#) and [Know Your Rights on Campus](#).
- Review your institution's [Title IX policy](#) - is it visible on the institution's website? Is it visible around campus? Is the faculty trained to identify Title IX violations? Is your institution in complete compliance with these requirements?
 - If you answered “no” to any of these questions – you have your [first action item](#)!
- Develop a personal story – why is this issue so important to you?
- Talk to friends, family and parents, fellow students, faculty and staff, other student groups on campus. Ask them to give you 10 minutes on the agenda at their next meeting.



- If your college is a [C/U partner member](#) of AAUW, talk to your C/U Rep.
- Build coalitions – join forces with student groups and sports teams who want to support your cause.
- Find out what other colleges in your area are doing.
- Look for local community groups – like your [local AAUW Branch!](#) – who are focusing on this issue. What resources do they have available to you.
- [Host a House Meeting](#) in the dining hall, a conference room, or in a classroom. Invite people to an informational session to learn and talk about the issues. Gauge their interest, capacity to help, and unique skillsets.

STEP 3: ADVOCATE – advocacy is defined as engaging in dialogue about an issue one cares about. The most important part of being a good advocate, is to clearly articulate “the ask.” What is your position on a particular issue, and what are you asking people to do?

- You’ve mobilized a core group of people who are as passionate as you are, and ready to fight for change. Now, what and how do we need to change?
- For starters, here are four legislative vehicles at the federal and state level that address sexual harassment and assault (this is by no means an exhaustive list):
 1. **The U.S. Department of Education’s [2011 Title IX Dear Colleague Letter Guidance](#) recommends that schools provide educational programs on sexual violence.**
 2. **The [Violence Against Women Act \(VAWA\)](#) was reauthorized in March 2013. Included in that legislation was the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act, which strengthened the [Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act](#) (Clery Act) of 1990.**
 3. **The [Campus SaVE Act](#), which was passed in 2013 under VAWA, requires colleges to provide “primary prevention and awareness programs” for new students and employees, as well as ongoing prevention and awareness campaigns (this Act strengthens the **Clery Act**). These educational programs must include certain subjects:
 - i. A statement by the school that it prohibits acts of sexual violence
 - ii. The definition of various acts of sexual violence
 - iii. Education on bystander intervention
 - iv. Risk reduction programs so students recognize and can avoid abusive behaviors or potential attacks
 - v. Information on the school’s reporting system and disciplinary proceedings**
- Over the last six months, advocates, students, administrators, and schools came together to work out how to implement the **Campus SaVE Act by the 2014–15 school year**. The process is called a [negotiated rulemaking](#).
- **ACTION: Keep pressure on your school administrators and the U.S. Department of Education to ensure they are prioritizing the students’ safety during this negotiated rulemaking and implementation period.**



4. New York State's [Women's Equality Act \(WEA\) \(A 8070\)](#) is a multi-pronged Women's Equality Agenda, originally proposed by NY State Governor Andrew Cuomo in his 2013 State of the State. The Act would update New York laws to provide stronger legal protections for women and their families. The legislation is much broader than preventing sexual violence against women. If enacted, it would achieve pay equity for women, stop sexual harassment, prevent pregnancy discrimination in the workplace and on college campuses, strengthen human trafficking laws and protections for domestic violence victims, end family status discrimination, and protect women's reproductive health by aligning New York law with federal law and state medical practice.
- **ACTION: Urge the New York State Senate to pass the entire Women's Equality Act (WEA) to make NY laws as strong as NY women. [Sign the petition](#). Watch the [Illengal or Just Sleazy?](#) video. Tweet: @AAUWNY, @NY4Women, #UpgradeNY, #WEAreStrong. Post on Facebook: [AAUW-NYS](#) and [NYWEC](#).**

HOW do we advocate for these changes:

- If you believe your institution's Title IX policies are insufficient or not in compliance, you can:
 - Contact your Title IX Coordinator on campus
 - Work with your school to [change policies](#) on campus
 - [File a Title IX complaint](#) with the U.S. Department of Education to initiate an investigation into your school's policies and practices
 - [File a Title IX civil lawsuit](#) against your school
 - Use AAUW's [Legal Advocacy Fund](#) resources to ensure your rights are being protected on campus!
- Sign up for AAUW's [Action Network](#) so you receive notifications to contact your members of Congress through the [Two-Minute Activist](#).
- [Develop a petition](#) or sign-on letter – urging action on a specific issue. Plan to deliver it to your college president, or an elected official.
- [Hold a Meeting with an Elected Official](#) – and include a [Special Delivery](#) plan to deliver your petition, or other symbol of your campaign to an elected official. Be creative and draw lots of media attention!
- [Develop an Anti-violence "Pact"](#) – ask your college administrators to support the pact, and have students sign on, pledging to prevent sexual violence and harassment on their campus.
- [Tabling Event](#) - reserve a table in a high-traffic area on campus to raise awareness and gain support for your campaign. Have people sign your petition or pact.
- Host a [Sexual Assault Community Forum](#), Issue Forum, Town Hall, or Tele-Town Hall – with partner colleges and community organizations. Use AAUW's 2005 report [Drawing the Line: Sexual Harassment on Campus](#) as the jumping-off point of the forum. Include a panel of experts, a video introduction, and real stories from the students.
- [Plan a Rally](#) – to bring public attention to your issue.
- Host [The Clothesline Project](#) on campus. Survivors of violence and allies are invited to decorate a t-shirt speaking out against sexual violence and hang it amongst other t-shirts (this is a popular event on college campuses).



- **Take Back The Night** – a national movement in which events are organized to raise awareness of sexual violence. Many colleges and universities host organized Take Back The Night events that include activities such as an organized march around campus, a survivor speak-out, and a candlelight vigil.
- **One Billion Rising For Justice** - is a global call to women survivors of violence and those who love them to gather safely in community outside places where they are entitled to justice.
- **Apply for a grant** – AAUW states and branches can apply to receive up to \$750 to hold an **AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund** Campus Outreach Program at a local college or university. States and branches select the campus and choose the program’s format and topic, such as sexual harassment or assault, pay discrimination, or Title IX. Because **LAF Campus Outreach Programs** are funded through an LAF grant, even branches with few financial resources can participate.

STEP 4: SHARE YOUR MESSAGE

- Pitch your story/event to the **local media**.
- **Write an op-ed** or a **Letter to the Editor (LTE)**.
- Use AAUW’s **Two-Minute Activist** to let your elected officials know where you stand.
- **Use Social Media for Advocacy** and create a **Social Media Campaign** –
 - Anti-sexual violence blogs
 - Facebook and Twitter Pages – create a Facebook page and Twitter account with unique hashtags. Host a Twitter Chat and/or a Twitter Storm
 - Create a campaign website
 - Produce and post a YouTube video
 - Start an anti-sexual violence publication
- Post the AAUW video, **You Throw Like A Girl**, on your social media pages.

Make sure you’re sharing everything you’re doing! Connect with your C/U Rep; your local, state, and national AAUW contacts; your university; your peers; and the community. We want to know what you’re doing so we can support you and promote your efforts broadly.

- **AAUW Report-back Form**. After an event, an Action (like submitting an op-ed or LTE, or launching a petition), important meeting (like meeting with an elected official), etc. take 2 minutes to complete the Report-back Form so that AAUW is aware of your activities and can celebrate your success. Don’t forget to include pictures and weblinks!
- Post on **AAUW’s National Facebook** page, and on the **AAUW-NYS Facebook** page.
- Use **Twitter**:
 - HANDLES: @AAUWNY, @AAUW, @AAUWPolicy, @AAUWHigherEd
 - HASHTAGS: #AAUW, #fem2, #UseThe19th, #fairpay
- Use **AAUW’s national** website and **AAUW-NYS’s** website as resources.



National Contacts:

- **AAUW Manager of College/University Relationships** – Christine Hernandez, coll-univ@aauw.org
- **AAUW VP of Government Relations** – Lisa Maatz, advocacy@aauw.org

State & Local AAUW Contacts:

- **New York State President** – Mary Lou Davis, Poughkeepsie/Empire State Virtual Branches, maryloudavis125@gmail.com
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- **New York State Public Policy VP** – Donna Seymour, St Lawrence County/Empire State Virtual Branches, seymour6985@verizon.net

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) empowers women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research. Our nonpartisan, nonprofit organization has nearly 16,000 members and supporters in New York State – more than 170,000 across the United States – as well as 1,000 local branches and more than 800 college and university partners. Learn more and join us at www.aauw.org. You can also follow us on Twitter ([@AAUWNY](https://twitter.com/AAUWNY)) and on Facebook (www.facebook.com/AAUW.NYS).