

## CHAMPIONING CHANGE

Now more than ever, thoughtful, responsible public policy is the key to transforming the way our country addresses sexual violence. This campaign initiative will build coalitions and launch strategic efforts for survivor-led change across the country, protect vulnerable populations from sexual abuse, and ensure all survivors have access to critical care and services.

### THRIVE TOGETHER CHAMPIONING CHANGE: \$2M

Funding for the Championing Change initiative will allow RAINN to build on our decades of experience in supporting survivors and preventing abuse to develop survivor-centered policies and protect vulnerable populations, ensuring survivors in every community have access to critical care and services.

### Our Agenda

Funding for the Championing Change initiative will advance RAINN's work to build on the progress made through landmark federal legislation like the Debbie Smith Act, Violence Against Women Act, and PROTECT Our Children Act. But much more needs to be done to protect children, provide services for survivors of sexual violence, and hold perpetrators accountable to prevent future victimization. As a leader in this sector, **RAINN proposed 12 focus areas and policy recommendations** to guide specific actions to make a measurable difference for survivors.

**1. Eliminate the rape kit backlog** by allocating an infusion of funding to address this outstanding need.

- 2. Increase protections for children from sexual abuse and exploitation** by providing coordinated and high-level oversight and increased urgency through the declaration of a national emergency.
- 3. Prioritize funding for crisis response to sexual assault** and bolster available grants and resources to address gaps in funding.
- 4. Increase the availability of sexual assault forensic nurses** by establishing national centers of excellence and making training available across the U.S.
- 5. Reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act** and extend jurisdiction to include sexual violence.
- 6. Prioritize trauma-informed training for law enforcement** and incentivize states to improve and standardize requirements for any first responders engaging with victims of sexual assault.
- 7. Close the law enforcement consent loophole** and enact reforms to hold law enforcement officers accountable for abusing their authority and victimizing people in their custody.



- 8. Eliminate the remaining statutes of limitations on sex crimes** to ensure all survivors have the ability to bring their abusers to justice.
- 9. Improve data on sexual violence and child sexual abuse system response** by assessing the feasibility of an established statewide system to track reports of sexual assault and child sexual abuse across agencies.
- 10. Address the sex abuse to prison pipeline** by allocating funding to school systems to screen for trauma and provide support services to address status offenses by minors with trauma histories.
- 11. Support additional LGBTQ+ protections** and ensure that homeless youth are provided with transitional housing, street outreach, and crisis intervention programs by reauthorizing the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.
- 12. Match EU resource commitments to end gender-based violence in Africa** by building on partnerships with local African civil society groups providing post-rape services and care for victims of sexual violence.

To accomplish this and other work on the ground, **RAINN will enlist allies in priority states**, working closely with law enforcement, prosecutors, sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE), victim advocates, local sexual assault service providers, and survivors to drive progress at the local and national level. Every nine minutes, child protective services substantiates, or finds evidence for, a claim of child sexual abuse.

**Protecting children from sexual abuse:** RAINN's policy team is part of a coalition of leading nonprofit organizations working with congressional leaders in both parties to draft legislation to protect children from sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse. RAINN will prioritize solutions that focus on increasing capacity to indict dual offenders and rescue children directly from harm.

**COVID-19:** RAINN created and shared with government agencies at the federal, state, and local levels a checklist of considerations for preventing and responding to sexual violence as they build and manage temporary medical facilities related to COVID-19. The guidance covers issues such as investigating sexual assault, forensic interviews for abused children, and ensuring the continuity of services such as sexual assault forensic exams during coronavirus-related closures. RAINN will ensure reporting mechanisms are in place and that the safety of children remains a top priority for authorities during these challenging times.

## Mobilizing to Support Survivors at the State Level

Funding for the Championing Change initiative will support RAINN's efforts to build local coalitions to help ensure all survivors have access to critical care and services.

RAINN identifies and enlists allies in targeted priority states where policy changes can make the biggest impact for survivors. Through this work, RAINN and our partners advance key legislation to support survivors by passing responsible, survivor-centered policies that can be scaled and replicated nationally.

RAINN's team of lobbyists is at work in five state legislatures: Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Ohio, and Virginia, partnering with local sexual assault prevention advocates, sexual assault coalitions, prosecutors, law enforcement associations, and survivors.

In 2020, RAINN helped pass 10 bills in five states to improve laws for survivors, including legislation in Virginia to create a state coordinator for SANE services and require hospitals to provide treatment or transfer services to survivors seeking forensic exams.

