

# CAMPUS SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN VERMONT



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1 in 10 students will experience sexual violence by the time they leave college which means an estimated 4,000 current students in Vermont have or will experience sexual violence by the end of the 2022-23 school year. Despite epidemic levels of sexual violence on campuses, 90% of student survivors do not report the incident and 85% of student survivor do not access support resources following an incident.

The trauma of sexual violence and the subsequent lack of support and resources for student survivors often manifest as devastating long-term impacts on educational and economic outcomes, long-term career trajectory, and emotional and physical health. Given that those with marginalized identities experience sexual violence at higher rates, what is happening on campuses is not only any issue of education equity, but of racial, gender and LGBTQ+ equity.

## THE SOLUTION: ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC CAUSES OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON CAMPUSES

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In 2019, the Vermont Legislature passed Act 77 creating the Task Force on Campus Sexual Harm which was charged with “examin[ing] issues relating to responses to sexual harm, dating and intimate partner violence, and stalking on campuses of postsecondary educational institutions in Vermont.” The Task Force’s report in 2020 included a recommendation of creating an Intercollegiate Sexual Harm Prevention Council (created in Act 68, 2021) in order to establish legislative and campus-based solutions based on the Task Force’s report and recommendations.

In order to elevate the legislative recommendations as identified by the Task Force and Council, the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence has partnered with The Every Voice Coalition (EVC), a student and survivor-led nonprofit. EVC has successfully advocated for comprehensive campus sexual harm reforms in six states- ME, MA, NH, CT, IL, NV



VERMONT  
NETWORK



EVERY VOICE

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# P R O P O S E D L E G I S L A T I O N

2020 Task Force Findings	2020 Task Force Recommendations	Proposed 2023 Legislative Solution
<p>"Vermont lacks any publicly available data on higher education campus sexual harm, either by institution or statewide. This impacts students, policy makers and the general public, and limits options for strategic approaches for addressing or preventing sexual harm in institutions of higher education."</p>	<p><b>Recommendation #3: Campus Climate Survey</b>            Requiring institutions of higher education to collect, and make publicly available, aggregate information about sexual harassment, sexual assault and other sexual harm impacting their students and staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Charge the... statewide council [with] developing a model sexual harm climate survey.</li> <li>Establish a data repository for all institutions' summaries of sexual harm climate surveys.</li> </ul>	<p>A task force of stakeholders -- including students-- is created and is tasked with creating a base survey for higher education institutions' climate surveys. Institutions then use the base survey to conduct their climate survey of all students biennially, and post the findings on the institution's website and in a state-wide data repository.</p>
<p>"Students impacted by sexual harm may not seek help or make a report because they fear being punished for underage drinking, illegal drug use, or being in violation of their school's conduct policy."</p>	<p><b>Task Force Recommendation #8: Statutory Protections for Survivors of Sexual Harm</b>            Establishing statutory protections to ensure that survivors of sexual harm will not be punished for reporting an incident of sexual violence due to alcohol, drug use, or other minor conduct violations occurring at or around the time of an assault.</p>	<p>State law to create statutory protections for individuals who report sexual harm. Institutions mandated to establish institutional amnesty policy.</p>
<p>"Students impacted by sexual harm need a range of options for dealing with the impacts of what happened, limiting additional harm and trauma, finding safety, healing and community, and pursuing accountability and justice as they define it....Vermont's institutions of higher education have widely varying resources available to improve responses for people impacted by sexual harm."</p>	<p><b>Task Force Recommendation #6: Improve Options, Resources &amp; Support for Survivors</b>            Establishing an MOU with a community health center and a community sexual violence advocacy organization to augment the programming and supports offered on-campus.</p>	<p>Institutions must establish and maintain a memorandum of understanding with a rape crisis or domestic violence center. These organizations provide free, off-campus sources of medical, legal, and counseling resources for students and employees, and will assist in developing institutional policies, programming, and trainings.</p>
<p>"Students impacted by sexual harm need confidential support in order to pursue a course of action that allows them to deal with the impacts; limit additional harm; access accommodations and maintain enrollment in higher education; and find safety and healing"</p>	<p><b>Task Force Recommendation #7: Need for Confidential Support</b>            Strengthening confidentiality provisions on Vermont campuses.</p>	<p>Institutions must designate at least one Confidential Resource Advisor (CRA) who can advise students about reporting options, resources and provide support and accommodations as needed. The CRA has privilege under the law to ensure confidentiality.</p>
<p>"Campus-based staff do not have ready access to structured, professional networks to share resources, information, and collaborate on violence prevention efforts."</p>	<p><b>Task Force Recommendation #1: Education and Prevention</b>            Promoting and providing the tools and skills necessary for the creation and sustainability of a comprehensive violence prevention program on every college campus in Vermont.</p>	<p>Institutions must provide mandatory annual sexual misconduct prevention and awareness programming for all students and employees. Institutions are encouraged to collaborate with local agencies.</p>