

# Guide for Political Parties and 2020 Candidates: A Policy Platform to End Sexual Violence in One Generation

## Introduction

RALIANCE – a national partnership of three top national sexual violence prevention leaders – believes that ending sexual violence in one generation is possible. Every person deserves to feel safe and respected in their homes, workplaces and communities. Survivors should be believed, supported, and able to seek the justice they deserve. Women, people of color, LGBTQ people, disabled people, workers in low-wage industries, and immigrants – whose voices and experiences have too often been overlooked – must be heard and empowered.

We're finally seeing a true public reckoning with attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs about power and the people and institutions that have abused it. Yet, more leadership and accountability are needed. We all have a unique role to play in prevention and changing the culture.

As political parties and the 2020 candidates share their vision for the future, they must include policies that address sexual harassment, misconduct and abuse. RALIANCE hopes this platform serves as a guide for how political parties and candidates can move us forward to a world free of sexual harassment, misconduct and abuse once and for all.

## Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

Congress must pass strong, bipartisan legislation reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act including increased investments in prevention; enhanced protections for Native women; strengthened housing provisions; homicide reduction tools; and improved criminal justice approaches.

## Sexual assault services and prevention

The nation's 1,500 sexual assault programs often lack the resources to meet victims' most basic needs and almost all of them have experienced an increased demand for services. Funding the Sexual Assault Services Program at the Office on Violence Against Women at \$60 million and the Rape Prevention & Education Program at the CDC Injury Center at \$100 million will help bring to bear important and much needed resources for organizations that serve survivors and lead prevention efforts in their communities.

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## **Healthcare for victims of sexual violence**

Survivors must have access to a full range of services, including emergency contraception, HIV prophylaxis, and abortion whether or not they have reported the crime, in both the immediate aftermath of sexual violence and over the span of their lives. These services include physical and mental health care to heal from sexual violence and mitigate the many consequences of trauma. From the forensic rape exam, conducted by a trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, to ongoing visits with a primary care physician or counselor, health care is of critical importance to victims of sexual violence. It enables them to cope with the myriad effects of trauma and to thrive in their lives and in our families, workplaces, schools, and larger communities.

## **Workplace harassment protections and accountability**

Despite the longstanding prohibitions against harassment based on sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, and disability, many workers, especially working women and those in low-wage jobs, continue to be denied equal employment opportunities, safety, and dignity. We support legislation and executive action focused on strengthening an employee's ability to hold their employers and harassers accountable.

## **Campus sexual assault**

Survivors need rigorous enforcement of Title IX obligations on campus and in K-12 schools. We oppose any rollbacks to protections for students including those promulgated by the Department of Education in their Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. We support age appropriate comprehensive primary prevention of sexual violence and comprehensive, fact-based sex education including issues of consent.

## **Military sexual assault**

There must be an increased emphasis, oversight, and training on the full spectrum of sexual misconduct and domestic violence offenses in the military. We support strengthening the Special Victims Counsel (SVC) program and removing prosecution from the chain of command to better support and empower victims of sexual assault.

## **Protect vulnerable survivors & community safety**

Discriminatory policies that target vulnerable communities such as immigrants and LGBTQ people increase the risk of sexual violence and make our communities less safe. Detaining immigrant children, preventing asylum seekers from putting forward their claims for protection, limiting the ability of immigrant victims to obtain U-Visas, and allowing discrimination in housing and healthcare are such policies. In contrast, policies that respect the dignity of human beings and encourage a safe environment to come forward and promote community safety and survivor well-being.

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## **ABOUT RALIANCE**

RALIANCE is a national partnership dedicated to ending sexual violence in one generation. Every day, RALIANCE makes prevention possible by advancing research, influencing policy, supporting innovative programs and helping leaders establish safe workplaces and strong communities. For more information, please visit [www.raliance.org](http://www.raliance.org) or contact Terri Poore, RALIANCE Policy Director, at [tpoore@raliance.org](mailto:tpoore@raliance.org) or Ebony Tucker, RALIANCE Advocacy Director, at [etucker@raliance.org](mailto:etucker@raliance.org).