



Voices of Ohio Survivors:
OAESV Survivor Advisory Council
& Ohio Policy Priorities

OAESV's Survivor Advisory Council

In 2015, OAESV formed a Survivor Advisory Council, comprised of 13 adult survivors of sexual violence from across Ohio who are committed to providing perspective, insight, and recommendations regarding public policy impacting survivors and the safety of our communities. Their experiences and their voices – like all survivors – matter.

Public Policy Priorities for Survivors

OAESV's Survivor Advisory Council and Ohio rape crisis centers have identified the following five public policy priorities:

1. **Maintaining the State Rape Crisis Fund:** Survivors of sexual violence deserve access to comprehensive rape crisis services. Maintaining the State Rape Crisis Fund in the 2017-2019 budget will help ensure that survivors get the help they need.
2. **Advocate Privilege:** When survivors seek help from rape crisis centers, they need to know that the information they share will be held in confidence. Establishing privileged communication between advocates and survivors will ensure that survivors feel safe accessing services.
3. **Police Training on Sexual Assault Response:** The trauma of sexual assault affects the memory and behavior of survivors in various ways, and many survivors fear not being believed if they report the crime. Required training for law enforcement on these issues will help to address barriers to reporting that many survivors face.
4. **Eliminating the Statute of Limitations for Rape, particularly for children:** Survivors of sexual violence often struggle with fear, shame, isolation, and even threats in the aftermath of the crime, particularly children who lack the power or understanding that adults have. Eliminating the statute of limitations for rape in Ohio would ensure that these brave survivors have the time they need and deserve in order to seek justice for the crimes they've suffered.
5. **Requiring Sexual Violence Prevention Education in K-12 Schools:** Various health and safety programs are taught to schoolchildren each year, yet there is no mandated education that addresses the widespread and pervasive problem of sexual assault and abuse. This needs to change.

"I am a survivor of sexual assault. I can't change what happened to me, but I can make a difference today. You can help me by making sure that repeat offenders get the maximum sentence or getting life in prison. Prevention and rehabilitation are very important but some offenders can't be rehabilitated. In the types of cases where prevention and rehabilitation are not effective we need to make sure they stay incarcerated. There needs to be a lifetime sentence for repeat offenders."

~ Jen Borrelli

"As a survivor of childhood sexual violence, it wasn't until my fourth decade that I could talk about it and my sixth decade that I received and believed these important messages: 'This is not your fault, the sole responsibility lies with the abuser.' You can help by using your position and influence to teach children about what is safe and unsafe touch and to teach adults about sexual violence and the many myths attached to it."

~ Survivor on Advisory Council