

January 25, 2017
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The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
911 NE 11th Ave
Suite 200
Portland, OR 97232

Dear Representative Blumenauer,

I am writing to urge you to protect college campus rape and domestic violence victims by lending your support to the Safe Transfer Act introduced to the 114th Congress by Representative Jackie Speier. If implemented, the bill would amend the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 to require the disclosure of health and safety concerns to post-secondary institutions. The Safe Transfer Act requires post-secondary institutions to disclose the final results of a disciplinary proceeding conducted by the institution against a student found to be perpetrating sex offenses investigation on that student's transcript. Most schools disclose on a student's transcript whether or not that student has been found guilty of plagiarism or cheating and this bill would hold those students found to be in violation of existing Title IX protections to be held to the same disciplinary standards.

This bill is especially important to this team because one of the authors of this letter was the victim of repeated sexual assault and relationship abuse throughout the course of her freshman year. During the orientation week of the victim's first year of school she was subjected to sexual intercourse without her own consent and a pattern of repeated unwanted sexual contact and other forms of dating violence throughout the school year. It is unclear whether or not the existence of an ongoing Title IX investigation will be disclosed to any post-secondary institutions the perpetrator could apply to.

The bill is an extension of current Clery Act reporting procedures. The Clery Act requires all post-secondary institutions to record and disclose information about violent crimes on campus in order to receive federal funding. The law was named for Jeanne Clery, a student who was raped and murdered inside her residence hall at Lehigh University when she was 19. Her attack was just one of 38 violent crimes that occurred at the university over three years. Clery's parents argued that had the university's crime record been disclosed they would have been better able to protect their daughter.¹ Extending that disclosure requirement to individual students who have been found responsible of campus policies on violent crime and harassment would create safer campuses and safer students.

Personal stories like the one presented above and the one that launched the Clery Act are disheartening but are not at all uncommon. According to the most recent available statistics provided by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, one in 5 women and one in 16 men

¹ "Ex-Lehigh Student Sentenced To Electric Chair for Murder," The New York Times, April 29, 1987, , accessed January 29, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/04/30/us/ex-lehigh-student-sentenced-to-electric-chair-for-murder.html>.

experience sexual assault while in college.² Among college women who are sexually assaulted, nine out of 10 victims knew the person who sexually assaulted them.³ Furthermore, in a national survey of adults, 37.4% of female identifying rape victims were first raped between ages 18-24.⁴ 63.3% of men in a study of one university who self-reported acts that qualify as rape or attempted rape admitted to committing repeat rapes or attempted rapes.⁵

The campus safety threat of repeat offenders is exactly why this bill is so desperately needed. Under current law, perpetrators of violent sexual crimes are protected from the disclosure of those crimes by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Individuals who have been found responsible of on-campus sexual crimes are free to transfer from institution to institution and repeat the same violent acts.

The impact of sexual violence on a survivor is varied. Every survivor reacts to trauma differently but some responses include depression, nightmares, and flashbacks, difficulty concentrating, eating disorders, substance abuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). One of the authors of this letter is currently receiving treatment for PTSD as a result of her sexual assault.⁶ Sexual violence has a broader impact than just to the survivor; however, family, friends, partners, and coworkers may experience similar trauma to that of their loved one as a result of sexual violence. Communities, including schools, are affected broadly by these incidents through demoralization and fear produced by sexual crimes. According to the White House, the economic cost of a rape ranges between \$87,000 to \$240,776 when medical services, criminal justice expenses, health service fees, and lost contributions of affected individuals are considered.⁷

Prevention of campus sexual assault is important to our state, our country, and our immediate and broader community. It is undeniably important to prevent sexual violence and the authors of this letter wholeheartedly believe that support of The Safe Transfer Act, through publicity, co-sponsorship, and a positive vote, is an ideal way to combat the epidemic. We urge you to consider our voices throughout the legislative session.

Best,

Leilani R. Ganser

Sonya M. Morud

² Krebs, C. P., Lindquist, C., Warner, T., Fisher, B., & Martin, S. (2007). *The campus sexual assault (CSA) study: Final report*. Retrieved from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/221153.pdf>

³ Fisher, B. S., Cullen, F. T., & Turner, M. G. (2000). *The sexual victimization of college women*. Retrieved from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/182369.pdf>

⁴ Black M. C., Basile K. C., Breiding M. J., Smith S. G., Walters M. L., Merrick M. T., ... Stevens M. R. (2011). *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 summary report*. Retrieved from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf

⁵ Lisak, D., Gardinier, L., Nicksa, S. C., & Cote, A. M. (2010). False allegations of sexual assault: An analysis of ten years of reported cases. *Violence Against Women, 16*, 1318-1334. doi:10.1177/1077801210387747

⁶ National Sexual Violence Resource Center. (2010a). *The impact of sexual violence: Fact sheet*. Retrieved from http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/Publications_NSVRC_Factsheet_Impact-of-sexual-violence_0.pdf

⁷ White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault. (2014b). *Rape and sexual assault: A renewed call to action*. Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/sexual_assault_report_1-21-14.pdf

Project Proposal

Overview

Despite advances in policy and public awareness some colleges are slow to change or update campus proceedings related to sexual violence on campus. This may be related aspects of campus sexual violence that are not included in policy or legalistic language. It is the understanding of the authors that students may be the key voices to shape the future of sexual violence response on campus and framing or promoting those voices should be the goal of any project.

Goal

Our aim is to present student voices in a professional setting to present to policy makers, school officials, student body governments, and eventually the greater public. This is best enacted through a student symposium on campus with students broadly affected by sexual violence at the center. By including a policy campaign and inviting area campus officials the symposium can be cathartic for the survivors while remaining informative and engaging for decision makers for all levels of the community at large.

Activities

First we plan to reach out to feminist student organizations and existing sexual violence prevention student organizations at colleges in our area. On our own campus, Reed College, we could have representatives from the Feminist Student Union and the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Team. In a day-long colloquium style gathering, these organizations can meet with analogous organizations on other campuses and participate in symposium style discussions on campus activities. Possible symposium topics throughout the day could include teaching active consent, combatting rape culture, centering reporting around victims, and providing resources in an effective way.

Throughout this day-long event we hope to have a policy action center with postcards addressed to congressional representatives and postage available. In this action center we will have a few sentences overviewing our letter in support of the Safe Transfer Act as well as some statistics on campus sexual violence. It would be important to address that policy does not only include governmental policy, but school policy as well. Here students can look at obligations under the Clery Act, Title IX, and SaVE Act and can consider where their colleges are meeting, exceeding, or lacking in terms of response and prevention. Ideally, this would encourage engagement within each attendee's campus.

The keynote event would be a panel discussion by student sexual violence survivors on their experiences, their frustrations with the response process, and their hopes for the future. This panel discussion would be an open event held on Reed College's campus for the benefit of all attendees. The intention of closing the event with the voices of sexual assault survivors is to simultaneously humanize and empower victims and frame policy and activism in a more empathetic manner.

Budget

1. Postcards, \$12.50/100 cards
2. Postage, \$49
3. Printing costs associated with distributive resources, \$300
4. Material costs of refreshments and workshop resources, \$50