




Press Releases

Leger Fernández, Murkowski, Klobuchar, Fitzpatrick Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Strengthen Healing Partnerships for Survivors of Sexual Assault

Washington, July 22, 2025

Tags: [Health](#) , [Gender Equity](#)

Washington, D.C. — U.S. Representatives Teresa Leger Fernández (D-NM) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), alongside Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), introduced the **Healing Partnerships for Survivors Act**, a bipartisan bill to improve and expand trauma-informed care for survivors of sexual assault through strengthened partnerships between community-based sexual assault programs and health and wellness providers.



The bill authorizes \$30 million annually for five years to help community based sexual assault programs provide culturally relevant, trauma-informed services for survivors—such as therapy, support groups, holistic healing, and case management—through stronger coordination with behavioral health, substance use, and disability service providers.

“Sexual violence isn’t partisan. It affects everyone, red and blue bruises can traumatize the victims for a lifetime. Survivors deserve safety, support, and the chance to heal—and that starts with strong, local programs. In New Mexico more than half of our residents have been sexually assaulted or raped at some point in their lives. That’s heartbreaking and unacceptable,” **said Rep. Teresa Leger Fernández**. “The Healing Partnerships for Survivors Act invests in the people and places that help survivors take their first steps toward healing. I’ve met so many brave survivors as Chair of the Democratic Women’s Caucus, and I carry their stories with me. This bipartisan bill is about making sure they never have to walk that road to recovery and healing alone.”

“Survivors of sexual assault deserve support to address both their mental and physical health,” **said Klobuchar**. “This legislation will strengthen partnerships between community-based sexual assault programs and services for substance use, behavioral health, and disabilities to provide more comprehensive assistance for survivors throughout their lives.”

“Survivors shouldn’t have to piece together care from disconnected systems. For years, I’ve worked with community partners in PA-1 to make trauma-informed support not just available—but coordinated, accessible, and effective. The *Healing Partnerships for Survivors Act* builds on that work by aligning sexual assault programs with behavioral health, disability, and substance use services. It’s a strategic, bipartisan investment in the kind of comprehensive care survivors deserve—and the infrastructure we need to deliver it,” **said Fitzpatrick**.

The bill is supported by more than **30 leading national and state organizations**, including:

- National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV)
- Democratic Women's Caucus
- New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs
- Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
- Respect Together (PCAR/NSVRC)
- Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA)
- Legal Momentum, The Women's Legal Defense & Education Fund
- National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV)
- National Organization of API Ending Sexual Violence (NAPIESV)
- National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault
- Standing Together Against Rape (STAR, Inc.) Alaska
- West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services
- Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault

- North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence


NEW JERSEY COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

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- Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA)
- American Samoa Alliance against Domestic & Sexual Violence
- Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
- Tahirih Justice Center
- DC Coalition to End Sexual Violence
- Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence
- Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence
- VALOR
- Just Solutions
- Jewish Women International
- Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CCASA)
- Esperanza Shelter
- New Mexico Fund for Women and Girls dba NewMexicoWomen.Org
- Solace Sexual Assault Services
- Casakids

“Survivors deserve support for the physical and emotional impacts of sexual assault. According to a 2022 report from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 26.8% of women and 3% of men have experienced a completed or attempted rape in their lifetime, and we know the pain associated with sexual violence and abuse results in short-term and chronic physical and behavioral health consequences that have a significant economic burden to victims and communities. As a result, meeting the complex needs of survivors requires the community working together in partnership and sharing expertise.” **said Monika Johnson Hostler, CEO & President of the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence.** “Thanks to the bipartisan leadership of Senators Murkowski and Klobuchar and Representatives Leger Fernandez and Fitzpatrick, the Healing Partnerships for Survivors Act, creates an innovative pilot program to incentivize partnerships between sexual assault services programs and community-based organizations to serve survivors comprehensively. We are very grateful these Congressional leaders understand the support necessary for all survivors to heal and move forward in their lives.”

“The Healing Partnerships for Survivors Act is a testament to the immense dedication of advocates and survivors who have tirelessly championed the need for increased support for our communities. This bill is an investment in healing, a commitment to bridging the gap between the overall demand for services and the resources needed to meet those needs.” **said Alexandria Taylor, Executive Director, New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs.** “We are here to ensure every survivor in our state knows there is support and a community behind them. We are so grateful to Congresswoman Leger Fernández, her team, and everyone else who has made this legislation possible.”



"In Alaska 2 out of 3 women experience domestic or sexual violence in their lifetime. This bill will fix the system by bringing community programs together to ensure survivors have access to what they need to heal and thrive. We applaud the introduction of the Healing Partnerships for Survivors Act." **said Brenda Stanfill, Executive Director of the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.**

"Respect Together is proud to endorse the Healing Partnerships for Survivors Act. This vital legislation recognizes that healing from sexual assault must be comprehensive, trauma-informed, and culturally relevant. By strengthening partnerships between sexual assault programs and substance use treatment, behavioral health, and disability services, this bill addresses the complex and intersecting needs of survivors across the lifespan." **said Yolanda Edrington, CEO Respect Together (PCAR/NSVRC).** "We applaud Representatives Teresa Leger Fernandez and Brian Fitzpatrick, and Senators Lisa Murkowski and Amy Klobuchar for their bipartisan leadership. The Healing Partnerships for Survivors Act is an important step forward in building a public health infrastructure at HHS that centers survivors and supports communities in creating safer, more responsive systems."

"At the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA), we see firsthand the deep and lasting impact that sexual violence has on individuals, families, and communities. Survivors deserve more than temporary support; they deserve a coordinated, culturally responsive, trauma-informed system that promotes long-term healing and restoration." **said Kenosha Alexander, Interim Executive Director, Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault.** "The Healing Partnerships for Survivors Act is a bold and necessary investment in that future. By strengthening partnerships between community-based sexual assault programs and health, behavioral, and disability service systems, this bill addresses the complex and interconnected needs of survivors across the lifespan. MNCASA strongly supports this legislation because it centers survivors, uplifts community-based responses, and provides the sustained resources that are so desperately needed."

Background:

More than 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men experience sexual violence in their lifetimes. In New Mexico alone, 54% of adults report being sexually assaulted or raped, and 40% report experiencing sexual violence just in the past year. Community-based sexual assault programs are seeing historic demand but lack the resources to meet it. Nearly half of rape crisis centers report staff shortages, and 66% have waitlists for counseling services.

The **Healing Partnerships for Survivors Act** fills these gaps by:

- Building partnerships between community-based sexual assault programs and health systems like behavioral health and disability programs
- Funding services like trauma therapy, support groups, and housing assistance
- Expanding culturally appropriate, accessible care
- Prioritizing survivor privacy and safety
- Supporting workforce capacity and virtual service infrastructure



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