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## PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# New Survey Finds that Adults are Most Likely to Believe Stricter Campus Policies are Most Effective Approach to Decrease Campus Sexual Assault

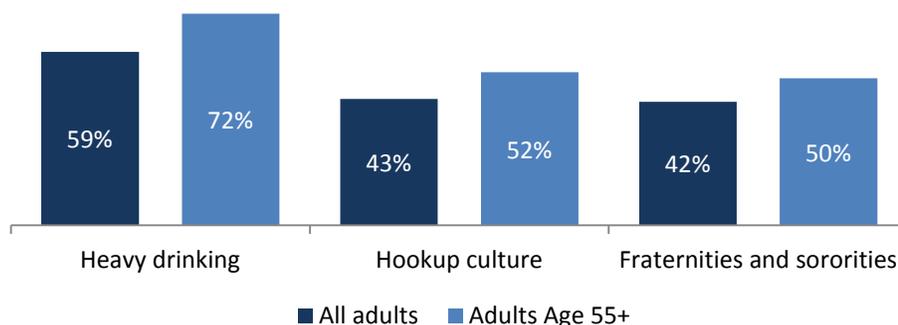
*Data also suggests some progress in public's understanding of the challenges tied to reporting campus sexual assault*

Harrisburg, PA – Today, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center announced the results of a new survey that revealed that adults are more likely to rank legislation requiring universities and colleges to impose stricter penalties as the most effective initiative to lower campus sexual assault rates. The study, which was conducted in partnership with YouGov, examines adults' views on the causes of campus sexual assault and potential solutions.

### *Campus Culture, Fear of Reporting Identified as Leading Causes of Increased Sexual Violence at Start of Year*

Adults are more likely to identify campus culture—including **heavy drinking** (59 percent), the casual **hookup culture** (43 percent) and **fraternities and sororities** (42 percent)—among the top five causes of sexual assault during the start of the school year. Adults age 55 and over are even more likely to select social factors overall as the source of the problem. Seventy-two percent cite heavy drinking among the top five factors that leads to assault, 52 percent cite the hookup culture, and 50 percent cite fraternities and sororities.

**Perceived Causes of Assault:**



— MORE —

Fears of reporting—including **victims fearing they will be blamed** (40 percent) and **victims feeling pressure not to report** (39 percent)—also rank among the top five factors contributing to sexual assault.

“It is encouraging to see that adults recognize the challenges victims face when it comes to reporting campus sexual assault,” said Delilah Rumburg, CEO of NSVRC. “The reality is that 90 percent of sexual assault cases on college campuses are never reported, underscoring that more work must be done to create campus cultures where victims are no longer silenced and perpetrators are held responsible for their behavior.”

### *Implementing Stricter Penalties, Making it Easier to Report Sexual Assault Rank High as Solutions*

Despite identifying the campus culture as the primary driver for campus sexual assault, adults (41 percent) were more likely to rank **“legislation that requires colleges and universities to have stricter penalties for sexual assault through campus policies and procedures”** among the most effective approaches to decreasing campus sexual assault. Similar initiatives such as **implementing stricter drinking policies (38 percent)** and **passing legislation that strengthens penalties through stricter laws and federal policies (36 percent)** also ranked among the top five. **Providing more options to make it easier to report (39 percent)** and **training leaders on college campuses, including professors, coaches, and administrators to play a larger role in preventing sexual assault (33 percent)** rounded out the top five most effective initiatives to lower campus sexual assault rates on campus.

While these findings indicate that adults generally recognize the effectiveness of more formal campus processes and procedures, they also demonstrate a lack of understanding of current policy addressing campus sexual assault. Only 18 percent ranked protecting Title IX among the most effective initiatives to address campus sexual violence rates.

“More than 50 percent of college sexual assaults occur during the beginning of the academic school year, and this survey sheds light on the fact that many adults look to our institutions to foster a safe campus community and strengthen systemic responses to sexual assault,” said Rumburg. “All universities should continue to identify and implement solutions to ensure a campus culture free from sexual violence in all its forms.”

### **About the Research**

NSVRC conducted the research on sexual assault awareness in partnership with YouGov through its online omnibus survey. The survey was fielded to 1,190 U.S. adults between September 6 and September 7, 2017. Figures have been weighted and are representative of all US adults (18 years old and older).

### **About NSVRC**

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) is the leading nonprofit in providing information and tools to prevent and respond to sexual violence. NSVRC translates research and trends into best practices that help individuals, communities and service providers achieve real and lasting change. The center also works with the media to promote informed reporting. Every April, NSVRC leads Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), a campaign to educate and engage the public in addressing this widespread issue. NSVRC is also one of the three founding organizations of Raliance, a national, collaborative initiative dedicated to ending sexual violence in one generation. The organization was chartered in 2000 by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape.

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