



2101 N. Front Street
Governor's Plaza North, Bldg #2
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Kristen Houser, Chief Public Affairs Officer
National Sexual Violence Resource Center
814-933-9960
khouser@nsvrc.org

Toll Free: (877) 739-3895
Phone: (717) 909-0710
Fax: (717) 909-0714
TTY: (717) 909-0715

www.nsvrc.org

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NSVRC statement on R. Kelly charges

Harrisburg, PA – It is vital that we hold those who commit sexual harassment, abuse, and assault accountable, regardless of their power, fame, or wealth. After the extensive documentation of abuses inflicted on Black girls and women by R. Kelly, NSVRC is pleased to learn that he is facing criminal charges for some of this conduct.

This case is a reminder that we must listen to and believe the accounts of Black women and girls, who experience sexual violence at higher rates than other groups of women but are often disbelieved and face systemic barriers rooted in oppression.

It is also important to be mindful of the language used when discussing the footage that in part led to these charges. The appropriate way to refer to this is video evidence of Kelly sexually assaulting a minor. Recognizing that legally, a minor cannot consent to any sexual activity, this footage is not a “sex tape,” nor a “having sex with a minor” but rather evidence of a crime.

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.

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