

# Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline

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NOW's Strategic Action Program

What is the Strategic  
Action Program?

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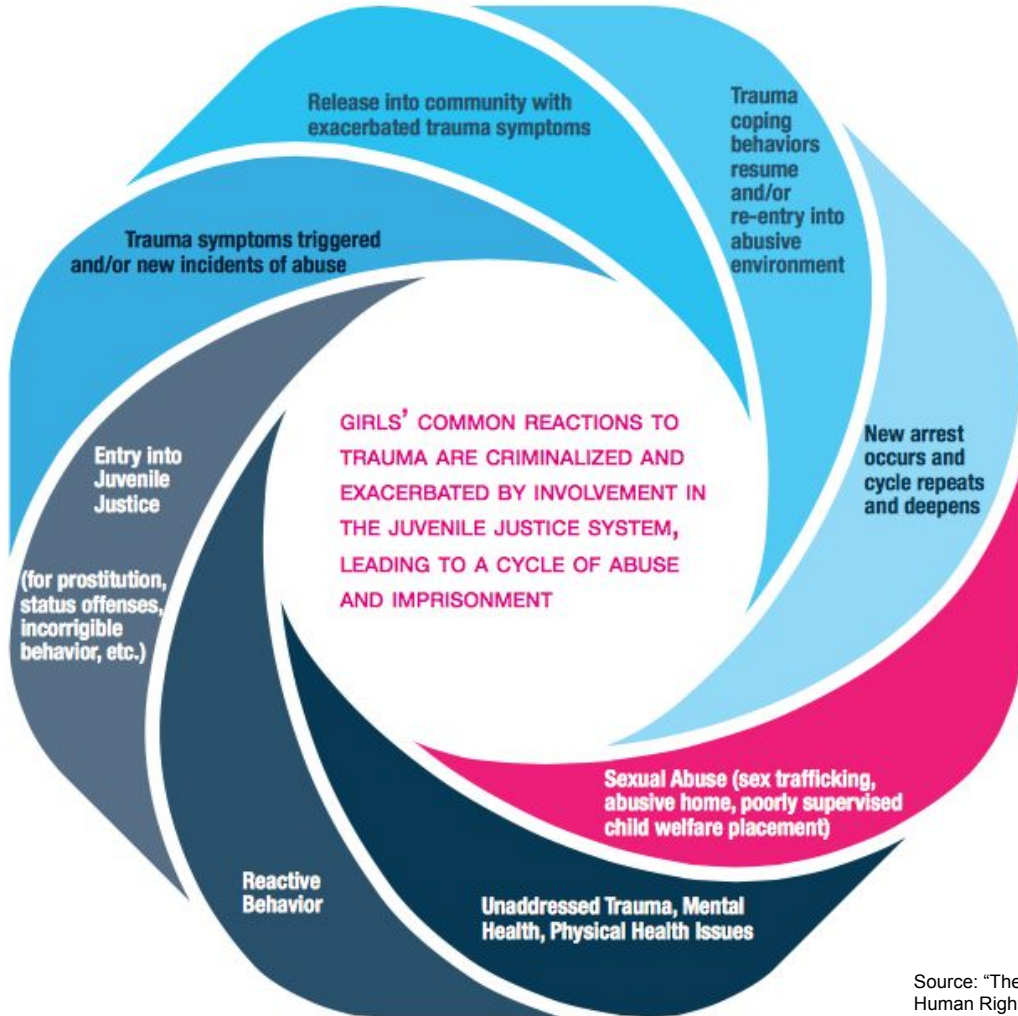
# The Strategic Action Program

Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline  
Reproductive Justice  
Equal Rights Amendment

- Engagement: National board + All other levels of NOW
  - Spotlight NOW's work
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What is the sexual  
abuse to prison pipeline?

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Source: "The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: The Girls' Story"  
Human Rights Project for Girls, Georgetown University Law Center  
on Poverty and Inequality, Ms. Foundation for Women

# Overview

Strategic Action Program  
NOW 2016

- Goals for NOW
    - Schools
    - Child Victims of Sex Trafficking
    - Justice System
  - Actions Items: Steps to achieve these goals
-

# Goals for NOW



# Quick Quiz!

What percentage of girls in the juvenile justice system have been sexually abused, compared to the 7% of boys that have been sexually abused?

- a. 45%
- b. 31%
- c. 53%
- d. 11%



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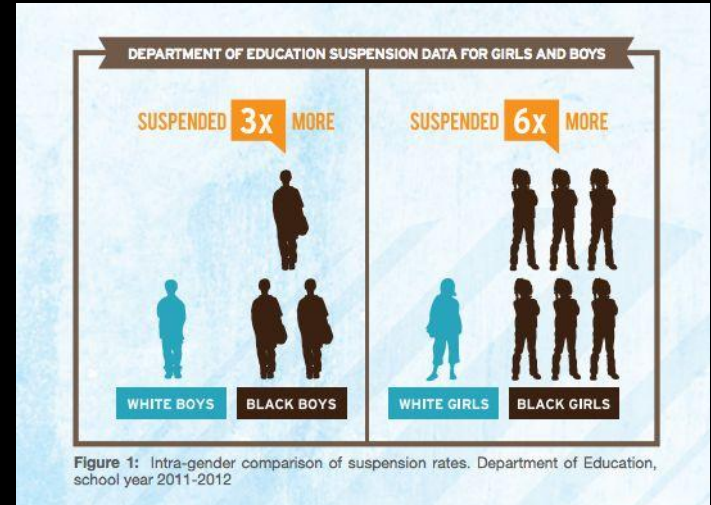
# Point 1: Schools

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Focus: Title IX resources and disciplinary policies

Unfair  
disciplinary  
policies push  
girls of color out  
of school.

And victims of sexual abuse are  
especially vulnerable.



# SAP Goals: Schools

- Revise school disciplinary codes to eliminate zero-tolerance policies that unfairly target girls of color.
- Make sure that your local school has a Title IX coordinator, and that their contact information is easily accessible.
- Raise awareness about how school policies disproportionately affect victims of child sex abuse, particularly girls of color.

# Quick Quiz!

Many reports discussing the sexual abuse to prison pipeline explain that often a girl's sense of belonging at school is further undermined when they are constantly forced to miss school or when \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. There are too few after-school programs to get involved in
- b. Faith-based activities and support systems are either not allowed or not easily accessible
- c. They attend extremely small schools
- d. Their achievements are overlooked or undervalued by teachers

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- d. **Their achievements are overlooked or undervalued by teachers**

# Point 2: Child Victims of Sex Trafficking

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Focus: End arrest of children and prosecute buyers

Child victims of  
sex trafficking are  
being arrested for  
prostitution.



# SAP Goals: Child Victims of Sex Trafficking

- Raise awareness about the arrest and detention of child victims of sex trafficking for prostitution.
- Demonstrate support for Nordic model legislation, which criminalizes buyers rather than sex workers.

# Quick Quiz!

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# Point 3: Justice System

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Focus: Gender-specific physical and mental health care

80%

Of girls in the juvenile justice system meet the criteria for a mental health disorder  
(compared to 67% of boys)

Strong link  
between abuse  
and mental health  
problems.

# The Problem:

Inadequate Physical and Mental  
Health Care

- Limited access to services to address trauma
  - Limited access to gynecological and pediatric care
  - Routine processes can re-traumatize victims
  - Possibility of continued abuse while on the inside
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# SAP Goals: Justice System

- Reauthorize and strengthen the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A).
- Fully enforce the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).



# Action Items



# Part I: Community-Based Action

1. Contact your local schools to find out if they use zero-tolerance disciplinary policies. If they do, connect with members of your community to write letters or emails to urge revision of these policies.
2. Find out whether your local school has a Title IX coordinator, and if their contact information is easily accessible. If not, insist that students have access to this valuable resource.
3. Publish letters to the editor highlighting the experiences of child victims of sex trafficking, and paths to a solution.
4. Ensure that girls are not subjected to retraumatizing procedures in justice centers by advocating for PREA compliance at facilities in your community.
5. Work with mental health agencies to ensure that Medicaid dollars can pay for trauma informed therapy, and to provide training on the pipeline for agency staff.
6. Increase visibility in your community by hosting an event, or just sharing information with people you know. Provide training to other NOW members at state or local meetings.

## Part II: Local Support of National Projects

1. Write letters to the Department of Education in support of policies that protect girls of color from being pushed out of school.
2. Lobby members of Congress in support of the JJDPA and the PREA--both in person, and through calls or letters.
3. Collaborate with other leaders dedicated to ending sexual violence--such as state coalitions and national advocacy groups. Ensure that information about the pipeline is included on their websites and in training materials.
4. Identify and endorse candidates committed to dismantling the sex abuse to prison pipeline by including appropriate questions on PAC questionnaires.
5. Use social media to raise awareness about the experiences of girls at all stages of the sex abuse to prison pipeline.

# Resolutions



# SEXUAL ABUSE TO PRISON PIPELINE: SCHOOLS AND JUSTICE CENTERS [1]

WHEREAS, the number of girls, especially girls of color, being pushed out of schools and into the juvenile justice system is increasing. Their involvement in juvenile justice is growing disproportionately at key points in the criminal justice process, particularly the decisions on behalf of school officials and law enforcement to suspend, expel, arrest and detain girls;

WHEREAS, evidence suggests that a leading cause is harsher discipline within schools and aggressive enforcement of non-violent offenses. In such cases, the decisions to suspend, expel, arrest and detain girls, particularly girls of color, are based in part on the perceptions of girls' having violated conventional norms of feminine behavior;

WHEREAS, research reveals that girls and young women who are sent into the juvenile justice system have typically experienced high rates of sexual violence, and many girls are routed into the juvenile justice system because of their victimization;

# SEXUAL ABUSE TO PRISON PIPELINE: SCHOOLS AND JUSTICE CENTERS [2]

WHEREAS, when school officials and law enforcement treat victims of sexual violence as criminals, the trauma that underlies the behavior is not appropriately addressed. Disciplining, arresting and detaining survivors of abuse punishes girls for being victims and fails to provide the services necessary for recovery;

WHEREAS, once inside the juvenile justice system, girls encounter a system often ill-equipped to identify and treat trauma. Punitive environments may re-trigger girls' trauma and subject them to new incidents of sexual violence, which can compound the profound harms inflicted by the original abuse;

WHEREAS, the combination of re-triggering conditions and lack of appropriate care leads to a harmful cycle of trauma. Studies suggest that many characteristics of the detention environment (seclusion, staff insensitivity, loss of privacy) can exacerbate negative feelings and feelings of loss of control among girls, resulting in suicide attempts and self-harm;

# SEXUAL ABUSE TO PRISON PIPELINE: SCHOOLS AND JUSTICE CENTERS [3]

WHEREAS, school systems that punish rather than provide trauma-informed services to girls and young women who have been sexually assaulted are failing to provide the equitable educational opportunity to which the girls are entitled under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972;

WHEREAS, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A) contains provisions aimed at ensuring that states comply with standards for gender-specific services, but needs to be re-authorized, strengthened and adequately implemented; and

WHEREAS, the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) calls for the development of national standards to screen inmates for a history of sexual abuse and provide appropriate medical and mental health care, limit procedures that are likely trigger re-traumatization, and grant timely access to emergency medical and crisis intervention services for girls, young women, boys, and young men who experience victimization within the system;

# SEXUAL ABUSE TO PRISON PIPELINE: SCHOOLS AND JUSTICE CENTERS [4]

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that NOW will include as part of its 2016-2017 Strategic Action Program a national action campaign to end the sexual abuse to prison pipeline, including reauthorization and improvement of the JJDPJA, full enforcement of PREA provisions, ensuring that every school at all levels has a Title IX coordinator whose work includes equal educational opportunities for girls who have been sexually traumatized, trauma informed counselors for victims of sexual abuse and exploitation, raising awareness about how school policies disproportionately affect victims of sexual violence, and nation-wide revisions of school disciplinary codes to eliminate zero-tolerance policies and other extreme measures that unfairly target girls of color.



# SEXUAL ABUSE TO PRISON PIPELINE: CHILD VICTIMS OF SEX TRAFFICKING [1]

WHEREAS, child sex trafficking is child sexual abuse often layered over pre-existing trauma: children who have been sexually abused are often pushed out of “zero-tolerance” schools when they act out and are not provided appropriate trauma-informed services. Such children are especially vulnerable to traffickers who seek at-risk youth. Child welfare agencies are tasked with responding to child sexual abuse cases, however, they are often unable to function as an alternative to incarceration unless the trafficker is a parent or caretaker, as defined by many state laws;

WHEREAS, even though they are too young to legally consent to sex, many jurisdictions still view victims of child sex trafficking as perpetrators, and arrest underage girls on charges of prostitution. As a result, numerous exploited and trafficked children--survivors of sexual abuse--are sent into the juvenile justice system and imprisoned as a direct consequence of their victimization;

# SEXUAL ABUSE TO PRISON PIPELINE: CHILD VICTIMS OF SEX TRAFFICKING [2]

WHEREAS, laws that criminalize sex with minors are too rarely enforced in the context of child sex trafficking. In such cases, the pimps and buyers of sex with children escape with little or no accountability;

WHEREAS, rape myths that girls are culpable in their assaults have been used to minimize this trafficking;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Organization for Women (NOW) will include as part of its 2016-17 Strategic Action Program, in conjunction with its national action campaign to end the sex-abuse-to-prison pipeline, a campaign to raise awareness about the arrest and detention of minors for prostitution, including educating the public on the role of buyers in perpetuating systematic violence against underage girls, young women, and other vulnerable youth;

# SEXUAL ABUSE TO PRISON PIPELINE: CHILD VICTIMS OF SEX TRAFFICKING [3]

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that NOW will demonstrate support for Nordic model legislation, which is a set of laws and policies that would penalize the demand for commercial sex while decriminalizing individuals in prostitution and providing them with support services, including appropriate care for child survivors of sex trafficking.

# Voting: Sunday Plenary Session



# Q&A

[NOWconference2016.wordpress.com](http://NOWconference2016.wordpress.com)