

The CONNSACS Connection

• Connecticut's Leading Voice to End Sexual Violence • Winter 2010 •



Stalking

According to the National Crime Victimization Survey, an estimated 3.4 million people are stalked each year in the United States (BJS 2009). Although stalking laws vary from state to state, stalking is generally defined as a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear for their safety. This "course of conduct" could include behaviors such as: repeatedly making unwanted phone calls, routinely waiting for a person, following or spying on a person, repeatedly showing up at a person's place of work, leaving unwanted notes or gifts, or using the internet to monitor a person.

There are strong connections between stalking and sexual violence. Some sex offenders monitor or follow their victims prior to an assault, and others repeatedly contact their victims after an assault has taken place. 31% of women who have been stalked by a current or former intimate partner were also sexually assaulted by that partner (NCVC 2004), and many stalking victims fear that their offenders may assault them.

Although stalking has existed throughout the course of history, it was not criminalized in the United States until 1990 when California passed the nation's first stalking law. The law followed the death of actress Rebecca Schaeffer, who was stalked for three years and then murdered by an obsessed fan. By 1993, every state in the United States had passed a law prohibiting stalking behaviors.

Connecticut criminalized stalking in 1992, but, unfortunately, the stalking statute has not been updated since then and is now outdated and rarely used. The current stalking statute makes no mention of the internet, cell phones, GPS devices, or other pieces of technology that stalkers commonly use to track and intimidate their victims. It only applies to individuals who fear for their personal physical safety: if an offender behaves in a way that makes a victim fear for the safety of their children, pets, partners, or another third party, it is not considered stalking. The law also does not apply to victims who worry that their stalker's behavior will result in loss of employment, public embarrassment, or other financial or social harm.

CONNSACS has been speaking with legislators about their concerns related to the existing stalking statutes, and we are extremely pleased that Representative Flexer (D-44, Killingly, Plainfield and Sterling) has sponsored legislation to update and improve these stalking statutes. [HB 6089](#) would expand the stalking behaviors that are covered in the statute as well as increase penalties for this frightening crime.

More information about stalking is available from the National Center for Victims of Crime's [Stalking Resource Center](#). If you or your organization is interested in supporting HB 6089 and would like more information about legislative advocacy efforts, please contact Anna Doroghazi, CONNSACS' Director of Public Policy and Communication: anna@connsacs.org

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2011 Legislative Agenda

The 2011 Connecticut legislative session began on January 5th, and from now until the session ends on June 8th, CONNSACS will be actively monitoring and weighing in on bills that impact victims/survivors of sexual violence.

Our full list of legislative priorities, along with explanations of why we are choosing to support these bills, is available on our [website](#). CONNSACS is looking forward to advocating for a range of issues that impact victims/survivors, including: stalking, sexual assault and people with disabilities, eliminating the statute of limitations for child sexual abuse, improving the response to sexual assault on college campuses, expanding Connecticut's anti-discrimination statute, and paid sick days.

We are also keeping an eye on legislation that might have a negative impact on victims/survivors and their communities. One issue of particular concern relates to sex offender residency restrictions (HB 6076 - An Act Concerning Residency Restrictions for Certain Sexual Offenders). Although this bill, which would prohibit certain sex offenders from residing within 2000 feet of a school or day care center, seems like a good idea, it may have unintended consequences that could place communities at more risk. More information is available from the [Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers](#) and the [US Department of Justice](#).

If you have any questions about our legislative





If you have any questions about our legislative priorities or are interested in getting involved in our legislative advocacy efforts, please contact Anna Doroghazi, Director of Public Policy and Communication: anna@connsacs.org or (860) 282-9881.

Getting Involved in Advocacy

CONNSACS and Connecticut's nine local sexual assault crisis services programs employ just over one hundred staff members. During the last fiscal year, they provided services to over 5100 victims/survivors of sexual violence and their loved ones, and they provided education to literally tens of thousands of students and community members.

In order to accomplish this work and provide high-quality services 24 hours a day, local sexual assault crisis services programs rely on a network of dedicated volunteers. These volunteers answer hotline calls, accompany victims to the hospital, and assist with community education efforts. Some are involved in fundraising efforts, and others help with support groups and community awareness events.

All volunteers complete a comprehensive certification program before they begin their work at a sexual assault crisis services program. These certification programs are offered at various times throughout the year at each of the state's nine local sexual assault crisis services programs.

If you are interested in becoming a certified sexual assault crisis counselor and volunteering at one of our programs, check out our website for upcoming trainings and contact your local program for more information.

CONNSACS also has a unique volunteer group called the Victim/Survivor Advisory Council. This group, which meets bi-monthly, consists of victims/survivors of sexual violence and secondary survivors. It is not a support group, but, rather, it is for survivors who are no longer in crisis and are looking for a way to be involved in ending sexual violence.

VSAC is always looking for new members. Please visit our [website](#) for more information, and call the CONNSACS office if you or someone you know is interested in being part of this wonderful group.

Airport Security and Sexual Assault Survivors

Prior to the busy holiday travel season, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) implemented new screening guidelines that generated criticism and raised questions about the line between promoting security and violating privacy. These guidelines, which included new body scans and invasive pat-downs, provoked an outcry amongst some passengers and led to media coverage exploring the connection between security screenings and sexual assault. [[For Survivors of Sexual Assault, New TSA Screenings Represent a Threat](#) (Newsweek) and [Fliers liken pat-downs to sexual assault](#)(MSNBC)].

Although the controversy surrounding security procedures has largely died down, it is important for travelers to understand what to expect from airport security. This is especially important for survivors of sexual violence, who may have heightened anxiety about the process or who may find it triggering. By knowing what to

Sexual Assault Crisis Services Programs in Connecticut

24 Hour Free and Confidential Hotline
1-888-999-5545 (English)
1-888-568-8332 (Español)

[Center for Women and Families of Eastern Fairfield County, Inc.](#) (Bridgeport)

Office: 203-334-6154
 Hotline: 203-333-2233

[Women's Center of Greater Danbury Sexual Assault Crisis Services](#)

Office: 203-731-5200
 Hotline: 203-731-5204

[Women and Families Center](#)

(Meriden, Middletown, New Haven)
 Meriden office: 203-235-9297
 Middletown office: 860-344-1474
 New Haven office: 203-389-5010
 Hotline: 203-389-9700

[Rape Crisis Center of Milford](#)

Office: 203-874-8712
 Hotline: 203-878-1212

[YWCA of New Britain Sexual Assault Crisis Services](#)

(Hartford, New Britain)
 New Britain office: 860-225-4681
 New Britain hotline: 860-223-1787
 Hartford office: 860-241-9217
 Hartford hotline: 860-547-1022

[The Center for Sexual Assault Crisis Counseling and Education](#) (Stamford)

Office: 203-348-9346
 Hotline: 203-329-2929

[Susan B. Anthony Project](#) (Torrington)

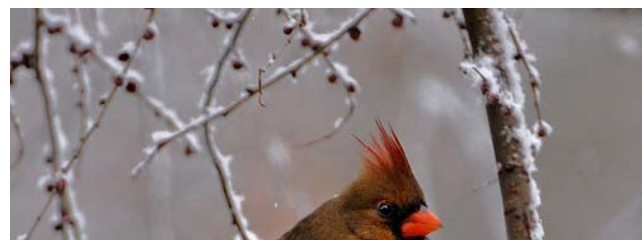
Office: 860-489-3798
 Hotline: 860-482-7133

[Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury](#)

Office: 203-753-3613
 Hotline: 203-753-3613

[Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Eastern Connecticut](#)

(Willimantic, New London)
 Willimantic office: 860-456-3595
 Willimantic hotline: 860-456-2789
 New London office: 860-442-0604
 New London hotline: 860-437-7766



survivors of sexual violence, who may have heightened anxiety about the process or who may find it triggering. By knowing what to expect, understanding their rights, and knowing where to direct complaints if they arise, sexual assault survivors can plan ahead and hopefully feel more comfortable when they travel.

Some airports have started using [body scanners](#) that use x-rays to create a naked outline of a traveler's body. The intent of these scanners is to identify any objects that travelers may be hiding on their person as they go through security. The images created by these scanners are viewed remotely (not by the person assisting the passenger), and the images cannot be stored or printed. Still, some people object to the use of this technology, and survivors whose abuse included being photographed or filmed may find it triggering. Passengers have the right to opt out of being scanned in favor of receiving a pat-down by a TSA employee.

The TSA [website](#) does not fully describe the pat-down process, but passengers could have their breasts and/or genitals touched.

The [TSA blog](#) is clear, however, that passengers have certain rights as they go through the pat-down process:

- * Pat-downs are conducted by same gender officers
- * All passengers have the right to request private screening at any point during the screening process
- * Anyone has the right to have a traveling companion present during screening in the private screening area

If airline passengers have concerns about how they are treated during the screening process or feel that they have been violated, they have the option of reporting abuse to the TSA or the American Civil Liberties Union:

http://www.tsa.gov/research/civilrights/civilrights_travelers.shtm

<http://www.aclu.org/technology-and-liberty/tsa-pat-down-search-abuse>

The **CONNSACS Connection** is a quarterly publication of Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, the statewide coalition of Connecticut's nine sexual assault crisis services programs. CONNSACS works to end sexual violence through victim assistance, community education, and public policy advocacy. Learn more about us at: www.connsacs.org

If you have comments or questions or wish to be removed from our newsletter distribution list, please contact us: newsletter@connsacs.org



In the News

[The Depressing Realities Of Rape Statistics](#)

In multiple cities across the US, rape statistics have been reported as decreasing. These statistics may not be completely accurate. An increasing number of victims from these cities have been disclosing that they were pressured to recant their stories by police or detectives. This could have devastating affects on future reporting practices.

[IVAWA Approved by Senate Committee](#)

On December 14th, 2010, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed the International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA). This act calls for the development of a comprehensive strategy to deal with and reduce the widespread violence against women and children, especially during times of armed conflict.

[Feds rescue 69 child prostitutes; bust 99 pimps and hundreds of other adults in nationwide sting](#)

The FBI led a 3 day, nation-wide initiative to rescue victims of child prostitution. During these 3 days, in 30 states and the District of Columbia, 69 teens were rescued, 99 pimps were picked up and 880 adults were charged with various counts of sexual exploitation of minors, human trafficking and prostitution activities. Since the launch of the "Innocence Lost National Initiative," lead by the FBI and the Justice Department, 1,250 children have been rescued from child prostitution situations.

[Pat-Downs at Airports Prompt Complaints](#)

Across the nation there are mixed responses to the new security measures at airports taken by the TSA, which includes full body screenings and enhanced pat-downs. Many feel it is necessary for security, while others feel that these searches are invasive and harmful, especially to victims of sexual assault and children.