



2016 was an exceptional year of growth for us, and the past few months have been especially busy. We hit the ground running at the start of 2017.

Check out some recent highlights below!

### Rights4Girls Executive Director Testifies Before Senate Judiciary Committee

On February 28th, Rights4Girls Executive Director Yasmin Vafa [testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee](#) on juvenile justice reform and the need to reauthorize the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) in order to protect vulnerable girls and survivors of violence and exploitation caught in the system. You can view a copy of Yasmin's testimony [here](#).



“Despite the fact that federal law is clear that there is no such thing as a child prostitute because children cannot consent to sex, let alone to their own exploitation, more than 700 children are arrested for prostitution each year.” - Right4Girls Yasmin Vafa

### Rights4Girls Named to HHS National Advisory Committee on Sex Trafficking of Youth

In January, Rights4Girls Executive Director Yasmin Vafa was appointed to the National Advisory Committee on the Sex Trafficking of Children and Youth in the United States, under the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families by former HHS

### In Other News

Child Exploitation Victim  
Latesha Clay Finally  
Released!

On January 27, 2017, Latesha Clay, a victim of child exploitation, was finally released from prison after spending a year behind bars. Latesha's case garnered national attention because despite her being a victim of abuse and exploitation she

Secretary Kathleen Sibelius. This committee was created as a result of the *Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014*, a law we are very proud to have helped develop and advocate for to protect youth in the child welfare system from sex trafficking.

## Gabrielle Union Highlights Rights4Girls' Work During Human Trafficking Awareness Month

In honor of Human Trafficking Awareness Month, Gabrielle Union penned an [op-ed in \*Essence Magazine\*](#) lifting up our work to ensure that girls of color are contemplated in the fight to end sex trafficking. During the month, Rights4Girls' [Yasmin Vafa](#) and Staff Attorney [Maheen Kaleem](#) also published articles on the work ahead in the movement to end human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

### Gabrielle Union: How Gender And Racial Disparities In Human Trafficking Affect Women And Girls Of Color

#### LATEST NEWS

9:38 AM President Trump Falsely Claims The U.S. Murder Rate Is The Highest In 45 Years

9:31 AM Thousands Left Without Power After Tornadoes Wreak Havoc On Louisiana

FEB 07 This Black Flight Attendant's Instincts Saved A Young Girl From Human Trafficking

FEB 07 These Cute Kids Just Destroyed



RELATED GALLERY

*In January, Gabrielle Union penned a powerful op-ed highlighting our work and advocacy on the impact of child sex trafficking and the Abuse to Prison Pipeline on girls of color in the U.S.*

was sentenced to nine years in adult prison for essentially being a victim of crime. Rights4Girls followed this case closely and remained in contact with her team of lawyers who worked tirelessly to have Latesha freed. Read our press release [here](#) and learn more about the tremendous work of Latesha's lawyers and advocates that finally led to her release.

### California Agrees —There's No Such Thing as a "Child Prostitute"

In January, we had a [major victory for our No Such Thing campaign](#) with the enactment of SB 1322, otherwise known as the "No Such Thing" bill which ends the arrest and prosecution of minors for prostitution in CA. We were proud to join our CA partners the National Center for Youth Law, the County Welfare Directors Association of California, and West Coast Children's Clinic, as well as many survivors of child sex trafficking in advocating for this bill. Given California's leadership on the issue of child sex trafficking, the passage of [SB 1322 was a major step in obtaining justice for victims](#) and ensuring accountability for exploiters and buyers.

## National Girls Initiative: Working with DOJ to Protect At-Risk Girls

Rights4Girls is proud to be named to the Core Advisory Team of the Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's National Girls Initiative (NGI). The NGI Core Team is comprised of the foremost experts, researchers, and scholars working to reduce girls' involvement in the juvenile justice system and address the needs of justice-involved girls nationally. Over the next three years, Rights4Girls will join NGI in launching a number of conversations and efforts to improve our response towards girls at-risk of and those involved in the justice system.

## Imagining a World Without Exploitation

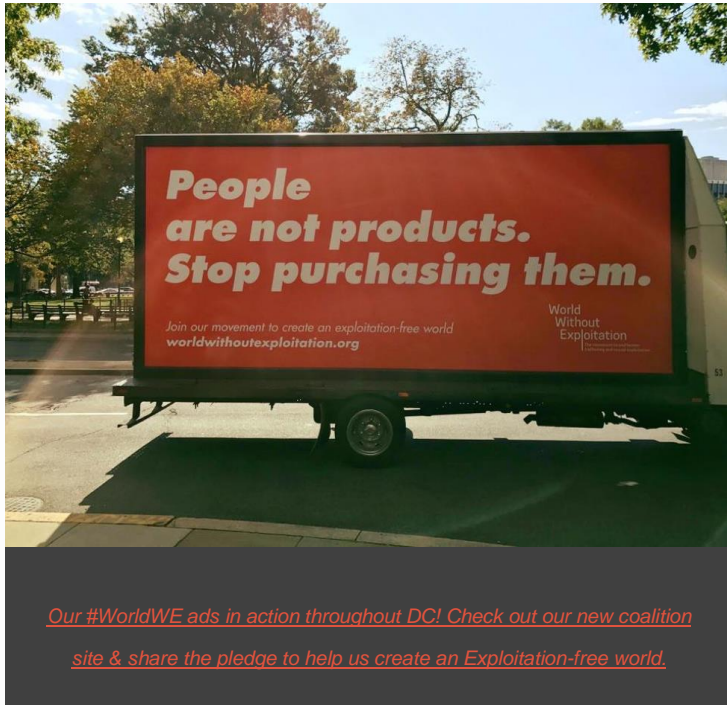
We recently partnered with survivor leaders, human rights and gender justice advocates, researchers, and direct service providers to launch [World Without Exploitation](#), a new national coalition committed to ending human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Rights4Girls Executive Director and WorldWE founding co-chair Yasmin Vafa, helped organize the two-day convening in Washington, DC which pulled together experts from throughout the country to build community with one another and strategize ways to use our collective power to develop targeted efforts to end trafficking and exploitation here in the United States.

## Rights4Girls Joins NTF Steering Committee Key Advisors

In January, Rights4Girls Executive Director Yasmin Vafa was invited to join the Key Advisors Group of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence (NTF) Steering Committee. NTF is a national alliance comprised of a large and diverse group of national, tribal, state, territorial and local organizations committed to securing an end to violence against women. We are thrilled for the opportunity to work closely with NTF and its partners.



*This December we traveled to Portland to convene with our fellow members of the Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention National Girls' Initiative, led by our partners at The National Crittenton Foundation.*



*[Our #WorldWE ads in action throughout DC! Check out our new coalition site & share the pledge to help us create an Exploitation-free world.](#)*

## Turning Inward: Rights4Girls in DC

Rights4Girls is excited to announce that we have bolstered our local efforts to impact the lives of girls in the District of Columbia. As a national organization working to improve the lives of girls across the country, we strongly believe we cannot forget the young women and girls in the city where we live and work. Through our work with the Youth Justice Project (YJP) and the DC Girls Coalition, we're ensuring that our national work on behalf of young women and girls has a distinctly local impact. We are committed to deepening our relationships with our local partners, community-based organizations, providers, and young women and girls here in the District.

[Donate to Rights4Girls](#)

With all of these important developments at the start of the year, we look forward to working with our partners and allies to continue this momentum to center the lives and needs of girls and young women in the year to come.