



Happy Spring from Rights4Girls! We have had a busy and productive year, and we could not have done it without your support. See what we've been up to the last few months and [help us continue](#) our work to protect girls!

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Legislative Update

Rights4Girls, together with our partners in the Act4JJ coalition, have been pushing for reauthorization of the *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA)*, which has not been reauthorized in over a decade. We are pleased to announce that on May 23, 2017, the House passed the ***Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017 (H.R.1809)*** with strong bipartisan support. The bill was led by Reps. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Bobby Scott (D-VA), and Jason Lewis (R-MN), and was co-sponsored by over 20 other Members of Congress. Significantly, H.R. 1809 includes critical protections for girls in the juvenile justice system, especially girls who have experienced domestic child sex trafficking and sexual abuse.

The House also recently introduced the *Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017 (H.R.2200)* -- a bipartisan bill led by Reps. Chris Smith (R-NJ), Karen Bass (D-CA), Ann Wagner (R-MO), and Ted Poe (R-TX), that

We've Been Busy!

In **March**, we held our National Judicial Institute on Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Austin, TX, training judges from around the country on how to improve our response toward child trafficking;

In **April**, Rights4Girls presented a seminar on the Abuse to Prison Pipeline at American University, lecturing on the intersections between race, gender, violence, and incarceration for women and girls of color;

In **April**, we presented at the Virginia Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence Action Alliance Biennial conference, where Maheen delivered the Keynote address;

In **April**, we presented at the PACE Center for Girls All About Girls' Summit on the Abuse to Prison Pipeline and our Girls at

reauthorizes the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act* of 2013. Rights4Girls continues to work with Members in both the House and Senate to ensure that domestic trafficking victims receive the services and support they deserve.

Rights4Girls In *The New York Times*

After years of advocacy on the part of survivors, advocates, and Members of Congress, Backpage.com finally shuttered its adult services section earlier this year. Although this was a hard fought victory, Rights4Girls has continued to emphasize that until a more comprehensive solution is reached, we will continue to witness the trafficking and exploitation of our most vulnerable through the internet. In March, *The New York Times* [quoted Rights4Girls'](#) Executive Director Yasmin Vafa in an important article highlighting the racial disparities and exploitation inherent to the commercial sex trade.

Serving Girls in D.C.

Although our work is national in scope, we retain a strong commitment to serving youth in the city where we live and work. In response to the recent media attention on missing girls of color in Washington, D.C., we authored [an op-ed](#) with our partners at Men Can Stop Rape to help shed light on the conditions that render our girls unsafe in their own communities and how we can better protect our most vulnerable youth. In addition, staff attorney Maheen Kaleem worked with a number of local organizers to create [a](#)

the Margin National Alliance.

In **March**, we were honored to be invited as special guests to attend the premiere of *The Bluest Eye*, an adaptation of Toni Morrison's novel performed by local students at Duke Ellington School for the Arts here in D.C.



Removing Barriers for Girls in Schools



[resource](#) for parents and communities looking to protect youth who go missing.

Rights4Girls continues to support local efforts to address the needs of marginalized girls and girls of color here in the District. In fact, this spring we were appointed to the Advisory Committee for the [Young Women's Initiative](#), an effort launched by Washington Area Women's Foundation to support and improve outcomes for girls and young women of color aged 12-24 in Washington, D.C.

Rights4Girls "No Such Thing" Youth Forum in CA

Together with our partners at The California Endowment, Rights4Girls hosted our [No Such Thing](#) Youth Forum in Sacramento this spring, where we convened young people from all over California to join us in spreading awareness about our No Such Thing campaign and learn advocacy skills to confront child sex trafficking in their communities. Students had an opportunity to strategize with survivors, advocates, policymakers, and—most importantly—each other and learn how to make their voices heard. Our event featured original art, spoken word, and interactive visual pieces inspired and created by survivors of domestic child sex trafficking.

Our thanks to our partners at the Endowment, California's CSEC Advisory Board, the STREAT Team, Sacramento Unified School District, Assemblywoman Shirley Weber's office, Judge Boulware-Eurie, National Center for Youth Law, and Californians for Safety and Justice for participating in our Youth Forum and helping to inspire a new generation of leaders to make clear that there is no such thing as a 'child prostitute'—only victims and survivors of child abuse.

report series launch.

We were proud to contribute to [this powerful series of reports](#) and speak to the importance of schools detecting and supporting survivors of child sex trafficking and sexual violence.



Staff Attorney Maheen Kaleem with powerhouse advocate and survivor Charity Chandler-Cole at the 2017 Survivors Speak Conference and Rally to advance justice for survivors of violence in California.



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As always, we thank you for your continued support. Our work would not be possible without supporters like you. Thank you for believing in our work and vision and help us continue our advocacy on behalf our most vulnerable girls. [Donate](#) today.

Top: No Such Thing Youth and Survivor panel.
Bottom: Original artwork inspired by our No Such Thing campaign.
To view more photos click [here](#).

Confronting the Legacy of Gender and Racial Injustice that Fuel the Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls of Color

We were honored to attend Black Women's Blueprint's [Words of Fire](#) convening at Spelman College this April, where we joined Black and Brown feminist scholars and activists from around the country to identify solutions to



In May, Rights4Girls moderated a panel discussion on girls of color in the juvenile justice system at the Right

address sexual violence across communities of color. Rights4Girls has long believed that prevailing narratives surrounding the commercial sex trade ignore important historical legacies involving the sexual subjugation of Black and Brown women and girls. Ignoring this history has led to the criminalization of Black and Brown women and girls for their own victimization, and to continued impunity for those who enact sexual violence against their bodies. We were grateful to confront this important topic together with our colleague Shakira Washington of the National Crittenton Foundation, at a workshop and discussion we led entitled, *From Recy Taylor to Latesha Clay*, to discuss the legacies of racism, sexism, violence, and oppression that have historically fueled—and continue to perpetuate—the sexual exploitation of women and girls of color— and to envision what freedom, agency, and justice look like for women and girls of color today.

to Remain Children
Symposium at
Georgetown
University Law
Center.

**Staff Attorney Maheen
Kaleem Wins Award
for Service**

We are so proud of Rights4Girls staff attorney Maheen Kaleem for being awarded the Kim M. Keenan Advocacy and Leadership Award by the Washington Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division for her dedication and commitment to service on behalf of vulnerable girls in D.C. and around the country.

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