



rights4girls

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Friends,

2018 was an exceptional year for Rights4Girls and 2019 is off to an exciting start! Check out some highlights from our busy winter:

Legislative Wins!

We are thrilled to share several significant legislative victories this winter: First, the ***Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)***—the most important federal anti-trafficking law—was reauthorized and strengthened. Rights4Girls worked with members in the House and Senate on multiple pieces of legislation that together update and strengthen this key law: ***The Abolish Human Trafficking Act, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017, and the Frederick Douglass Trafficking Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act, were all signed into law*** this winter—preserving our national commitment to survivors of human trafficking.

We are also excited to share that we finally achieved bipartisan juvenile justice reform with the passage of the ***Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP)***. We are especially happy to report that after many years of advocacy, the law finally includes language we championed to provide important protections for girls, including **a ban on the shackling of pregnant girls and diversion into services for child trafficking survivors caught in the juvenile justice system**. Read more about our gender-specific updates to the law [here](#) and find out more about the law's trafficking protections by reading our recent blog [here](#).

Rights4Girls on the Hill

From Capitol Hill to down south, this winter we continued to provide education and awareness of how human trafficking harms our most vulnerable girls and offer solutions to bring exploitation to an end. In January, as part of the Human Trafficking Awareness Month, **we co-hosted a legislative briefing with Senator Sherrod Brown's office** where we joined amazing survivors and advocates on a panel that connected the dots between sex trafficking and the opioid crisis.



R4G Staff Attorney Cherice Hopkins and fellow panelists at a Congressional briefing on sex trafficking and the opioid epidemic

Youth Workshops

This February we kicked off our second annual *Protect Our Youth* workshop series in partnership with Black Swan Academy. The workshops are open to all DC youth and dive deep into the issues youth voice as important in their lives and communities. Our first workshop, *Understanding Racism, Privilege and Systemic Injustice*, focused on racial equity. Stay tuned for more from our workshops!



Rights4Girls in the News

Our team continues to be a national voice on issues of child exploitation and the criminalization of survivors of violence:

- R4G Executive Director Yasmin Vafa was quoted in this powerful [Miami Herald investigative piece](#) on the Jeffrey Epstein child exploitation ordeal.

- Yasmin was interviewed by [Mother Jones](#) on the Maryanne Atkins case—another tragic instance of a child sex trafficking survivor charged with murdering her rapist and attempted trafficker.
- Our research was featured in this [recent piece](#) from the Atlantic’s CityLab about the disproportionate arrests of young women of color.
- Finally, check out our latest [op-ed](#) on the critical need to create spaces for girls impacted by the juvenile justice system to express themselves.

Cyntoia Brown Finally Granted Clemency!

Great news! [Cyntoia Brown](#)—a child sex trafficking survivor who was sentenced to life for protecting herself against her exploiter— was finally granted clemency by former Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam. Rights4Girls closely followed Cyntoia’s case and remained in touch with her legal team who worked diligently to have her freed. After 15 years behind bars, Cyntoia will be released on parole this August. We continue to stand with Cyntoia and all survivors of the abuse to prison pipeline who are unjustly punished for their victimization.

As always, we thank you for your continued support of our work to defend the rights of our most vulnerable girls and young women.

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