



rights4girls

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Dear friends,

As spring comes to an end, we are happy to share that we have had a very productive season defending the rights of our young women and girls.

Legislative Wins

In March, the House passed **The Victims of Crime Fix Act of 2021**. This bipartisan effort will provide greater resources to survivors by allowing additional funds to the federal Crime Victims Fund.

In addition, **The Stronger Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act** was passed in the House. This bipartisan response to the rise in child maltreatment will expand services for preventing and addressing child abuse and neglect with a particular emphasis on families impacted by substance use disorders, racial bias in the child protective services system, and child sexual abuse.

Locally, we worked with youth from the DC Girls' Coalition to ensure that their voices were heard on several measures being considered by the DC Council. In addition, we were pleased to see many of our recommendations incorporated into the [Police Reform Commission Report](#) with respect to better protecting survivors of sexual exploitation as well as improving our juvenile justice response towards children.

At the state level, Virginia passed several laws this spring that are critical in addressing the harms of sex trafficking. First, a law passed which **allows a victim of human trafficking to raise an affirmative defense when facing prosecution** for certain offenses. A second law provides a path for survivors with criminal records to have certain **convictions vacated or records expunged**. Finally, Virginia passed a law **bifurcating the solicitation statute to distinguish those who sell sex from those who purchase sex**— a small but important step that recognizes the inherent power imbalances of the sex trade and puts us on a path toward better protecting survivors from accountability for their own survival.

Presentations and Trainings

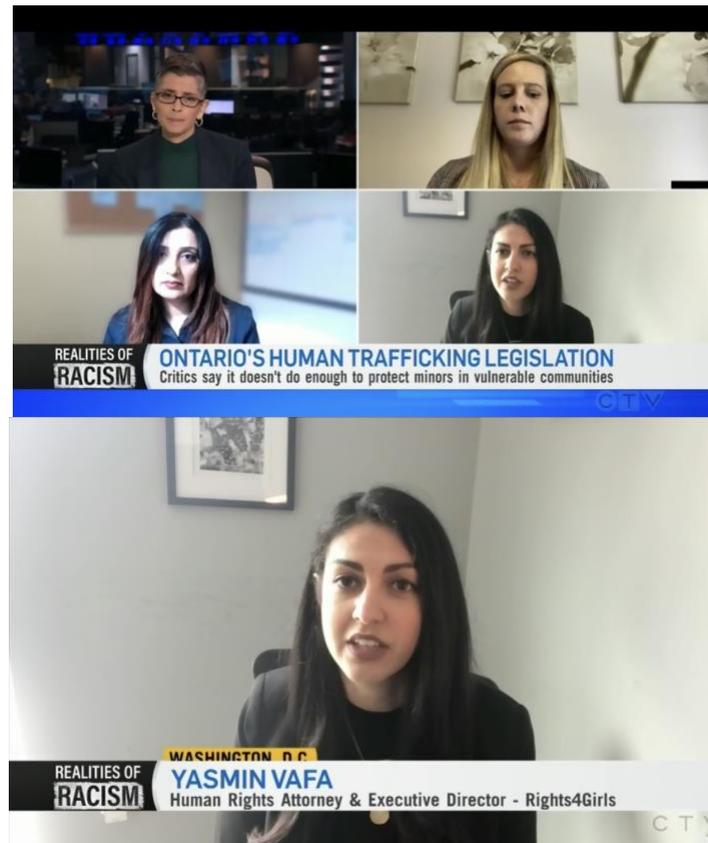
This spring, **we educated over 2,000 people** on the intersections of race, gender, violence, and criminalization for girls:

- R4G was honored to represent the United States and speak before the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on the importance of **gender-sensitive approaches in combating human trafficking**. Watch the presentation [here](#).
- R4G was thrilled to be selected to present at this year's Skoll World Forum! Our session, "**No Gender Justice Without Racial Justice: Ending the Abuse to Prison Pipeline,**" explored the importance of intersectionality with respect to both violence prevention and criminal justice reform. Watch the panel [here](#).
- Also, in March, we joined Ministers from the Governments of Australia and Finland and global human rights leaders for a panel in conjunction with the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to discuss the **legal and regulatory challenges to protecting survivors of online exploitation and trafficking**.
- We were honored to testify before the House Bipartisan Task Force to End Sexual Violence to discuss **steps Congress can take to better protect children & prevent child abuse as we recover from this pandemic**. Watch the discussion [here](#).
- In March, we joined women's rights activists from across the globe at the **Athena Film Festival** to discuss the impact of COVID19 on girls. Check out our panel: [Girls' Rights & the Pandemic](#).



Rights4Girls in the Media

Rights4Girls' Executive Director Yasmin Vafa joined CTV's Angie Seth to discuss the state of human trafficking laws and protections for survivors in the US. See the full interview [here](#)



Youth Engagement

As co-convenors of the DC Girls' Coalition, we were grateful to participate in the COVID-19 One Year Later Youth Summit where **DC youth shared their experiences through powerful performances and heartfelt testimonies of how COVID-19 has impacted their lives.**

Other News

- R4G's Yasmin Vafa **presented at the Georgetown Law Symposium on Sex Trafficking in the Age of Social Media.**
- R4G's Cherice Hopkins presented on **trauma-informed responses to the criminal justice system** at a Summit on Knowledge, Resilience, and Healing.
- We were thrilled to present at the **Michigan Abolitionist Project's Empower Conference** on various approaches to the equality model.
- We also participated in a panel hosted by Repair Disability Justice to discuss **decriminalizing survival and supporting survivors of sexual exploitation.**
- We joined the National Foster Youth Institute for a Congressional briefing on the **intersections between child welfare & juvenile justice involvement for youth.**
- RG4's Cherice Hopkins joined the Northern Virginia Chapter of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women and Virginia NOW for a conversation about the **criminalization of Black & Brown girls & the school to prison pipeline.**
- We also joined survivors and experts for a Congressional briefing to discuss what can be done to remove and ultimately prevent child exploitation, sex trafficking, and non-consensual content on sites like Pornhub. Watch the briefing [here](#).

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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