

MAY 16, 2024

# Readout of Convening to Mark One-Year Anniversary of National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence

Yesterday, nearly one year since the White House released the first-ever [U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#), senior Biden-Harris Administration officials hosted advocates from across the country to discuss the Administration's historic efforts to prevent and address gender-based violence. Ending gender-based violence has been a cornerstone of President Biden's career—including his championing of the original Violence Against Women Act in 1994 as a U.S. Senator. As President, he has signed historic legislation to secure the highest-ever funding to support implementation of the Violence Against Women Act, expand the reach of services to underserved communities, and increase housing protections for survivors.

Participants in the convening discussed the Administration's commitment to ending gender-based violence wherever it occurs—at home, at work, in schools, in communities, and online—as well as the substantial progress that has been made towards implementing the U.S. National Plan. Participants also discussed new Administration actions aimed at addressing gender-based violence, including:

- **Release of the Final Report and Blueprint of the White House Task Force to Address Online Harassment and Abuse.** Established through a [Presidential Memorandum](#) signed by President Biden in June 2022, the [White House Task Force to Address Online Harassment and Abuse](#) issued a [final Blueprint](#) that outlines comprehensive actions from more than a dozen federal agencies, including enhanced protections for students, children and youth, as well as programs that represent a record investment of more than \$36 million in dedicated funding to address technology-facilitated gender-based violence in the U.S. and globally.

- **New “Safe Leave” Options for Federal Employees.** The Office of Personnel Management issued guidance for federal agencies on the use of “safe leave” to support federal employees’ access to paid leave and leave without pay for purposes related to seeking safety and recovering from domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The updated guidance highlights options for federal employees to take leave to obtain medical treatment, seek assistance from organizations that provide services to survivors, seek relocation, and take related legal action. Today’s new guidance, consistent with a [Presidential Memorandum](#) signed by President Biden in February 2023, will help ensure that federal employees have access to leave when they need it.
- **[Survivor-Centered Initiatives Under the Violence Against Women Act \(VAWA\)](#).** In continuing to implement the VAWA Reauthorization Act of 2022, the Department of Justice recently announced new targeted grants and [initiatives](#) to address the intersectional needs and lived experiences of survivors. To increase additional pathways to justice for survivors, DOJ recently released a [solicitation](#) for the first-ever Restorative Practices Pilot Program to support, enhance, and expand existing restorative practice programs that prevent or address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and build evidence for victim-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive restorative practices addressing these harms. DOJ also launched the [Healing and Response Teams Special Initiative](#) to fund pilot sites using a Tribal-based model of care to respond to cases of Missing or Murdered Indigenous People related to intimate partner violence, sexual assault, stalking, and sex trafficking.
- **New Protections to Promote Survivor Privacy, Safety, and Economic Security.** The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) [called on](#) auto manufacturers and wireless service providers to help protect survivors from the misuse of connected car tools by abusers by helping ensure that smart car services are not being used to stalk, harass, or intimidate survivors of domestic violence. FCC then issued a [proposed rule](#) to that effect, which follows a [separate FCC rule](#) that allows a survivor of domestic abuse to separate a mobile phone line from an account with an abuser. The Department of the Treasury and Internal Revenue Service will also issue new guidance implementing a provision

of SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022 affirming that survivors of domestic abuse may qualify to receive penalty-free distributions from an employer-sponsored retirement plan to provide additional flexibility for a survivor who may need access to funds to, for instance, support relocation. The distribution from the retirement plan is included in gross income, unless the amount is subsequently repaid to the plan or rolled over to an Individual Retirement Account, but it is not subject to the 10% penalty tax that normally applies to an early distribution.

These announcements build on the Administration's previous efforts to address gender-based violence. For instance, the Administration has strengthened gender-based violence protections for Tribal communities, helped keep guns out of the hands of domestic abusers, restored and strengthened vital protections from sexual violence and other sex-based harassment for students, taken bold action to strengthen accountability for sexual violence in the military and advance bipartisan military justice reform, provided guidance to employers on how to prevent discrimination and make people feel safe on the job, and increased access to resources for survivors. This work is guided by the U.S. National Plan, which adopted a comprehensive, government-wide approach to end sexual violence, intimate partner violence, stalking, online harassment and abuse, and other forms of gender-based violence.

Participants in today's convening included:

- Jennifer Klein, Assistant to the President and Director of the Gender Policy Council
- Jessica Rosenworcel, Chairwoman of the Federal Communications Commission
- Charlotte Burrows, Chairwoman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- Rosie Hidalgo, Director of the Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women
- Robert Shriver, Acting Director of the Office of Personnel Management
- Lynn Rosenthal, Director of Sexual Violence and Gender-Based Violence

at the Department of Health and Human Services

- Catherine Powell, Senior Advisor for Gender-Based Violence of the Gender Policy Council
- Mary Anne Franks, President and Legislative & Tech Policy Director of the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative, and Eugene L. and Barbara A. Bernard Professor in Intellectual Property, Technology, and Civil Rights Law, George Washington University Law School

The event was livestreamed and the recording can be found [here](#).

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