



United to end sexual abuse,  
assault, and harassment

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**PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Pennsylvania's Rape Crisis Centers at Breaking Point Amid Budget Impasse**

***Centers are taking on debt, cutting programs, and laying off staff while continuing to serve survivors without pay.***

HARRISBURG, PA – Pennsylvania's 48 rape crisis centers continue to serve survivors of sexual assault 24/7—without pay—as the state budget remains unpassed. Respect Together, the parent organization of the Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect (PCAR) is calling on Pennsylvania lawmakers to act immediately.

"For more than five years, rape crisis centers have faced flat funding. Our call for an \$8 million increase to the Department of Human Services Rape Crisis line item has gone unanswered. Now, with the budget impasse, these vital services for survivors of sexual assault are at a breaking point," said Joyce Lukima, Chief Operating Officer of PCAR.

The consequences are severe and escalating:

- Centers are taking on debt—maxing out credit cards and lines of credit—just to keep doors open and hotlines running.
- Staff are being laid off or working without pay, showing extraordinary dedication no one should be asked to give.
- Prevention programs are being cut, leaving communities without tools to stop sexual violence before it happens.
- Survivors face longer waits for therapy and legal help, compounding trauma and creating lasting financial and emotional harm.

Despite these challenges, Pennsylvania's rape crisis centers remain committed to survivors—supporting victims during forensic exams, or on the hotline at 2:00 a.m., helping families impacted by child sexual abuse, and educating thousands each year to prevent violence.

“Survivors are keeping their side of the commitment by seeking help. Advocates are keeping theirs by showing up 24/7, even unpaid. Now it is time for Pennsylvania’s leaders to keep theirs—by passing a budget that reflects the value of these life-saving services,” Lukima said.

Respect Together calls on the Pennsylvania General Assembly to act without delay. Survivors cannot wait. Pass a budget with a meaningful funding increase for rape crisis centers across the Commonwealth.

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#### **ABOUT RESPECT TOGETHER**

Together with its main divisions, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) and the Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect (PCAR), Respect Together supports survivors, promotes research, identifies best practices, and shapes public policy. Our mission is to disrupt inequity and mobilize service providers, communities, and leaders to create and uphold safe, equitable communities with a culture of respect for all people.