

FEDERAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT; JEANNE CLERY ACT CONTROVERSY

On March 7, 2013, President Obama signed a bill that strengthened and reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act. Included in the bill were amendments to the Jeanne Clery Act, which afford additional rights to campus victims of sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. Nevertheless, the laws on the books do not nearly address the issue and extent of on-campus violence, rape and cover-up by college institutions, who fear loss of reputation and revenue if incidents are reported.

Newly Proposed Federal Legislation: Campus Accountability & Safety Act

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Currently, a woman in America who attends college is more likely to be a victim of sexual assault than one who does not attend college. But unfortunately, too many universities and colleges across the country refuse to acknowledge that they even have a problem.

Perversely, the current federal reporting requirements actually incentivize non-reporting, under-reporting and non-compliance with the standards under Title IX and the Clery Act (also known as the “Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act.”) In addition, there is very little cooperation on the part of universities with local law enforcement and, furthermore, students are not provided with adequate information about their rights and options in the event of a sexual assault. The result: according to Senator Claire McCaskill's campus sexual assault survey of 440 four-year colleges and universities, 41% of the schools surveyed have not initiated a sexual assault investigation in the past five years.

The bipartisan Campus Accountability and Safety Act will create incentives for schools to take proactive steps to protect their students and rid their campuses of sexual predators.

This new bipartisan legislation will, IF ENACTED:

1. Establish new campus resources and support services for student survivors

2. Ensure minimum training standards for on-campus personnel
3. Create new historic transparency requirements
4. Increase campus accountability and coordination with law enforcement
5. Establish enforceable Title IX penalties and stiffer penalties for Clery Act violations