

**October 25, 2019**

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL AND COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT PARTNER TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESOURCES**

***Raoul, Coalition Highlight Resources for Students Who Experience Sexual Harassment, Sexual Abuse & Sexual Assault at School***

**Chicago** — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced that his office is partnering with the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA) to improve awareness of sexual violence in Illinois' schools and help students access free and confidential assistance if they or someone they know experiences school-based sexual violence.

Raoul's office is providing more than 1,500 elementary and secondary schools in Illinois with resources to encourage students to speak out about sexual violence in schools. The awareness campaign also highlights the free and confidential support available through ICASA and its network of rape crisis centers throughout the state.

"We teach our children that they are safe at school, so when they experience sexual abuse or violence in what should be a safe environment, whether by a fellow student or an adult in a position of authority, students can be left feeling confused and afraid to seek the help they need," Raoul said. "I am proud to partner with ICASA to help students find resources that will aid their recoveries, and I urge school administrators to learn how to best support their students."

Attorney General Raoul's office is distributing resources to schools throughout Illinois that encourage students who have experienced or know someone who has experienced school-based sexual harassment, sexual assault, or sexual abuse to connect to ICASA, a not-for-profit organization of 30 community-based rape crisis centers. Each center provides 24-hour crisis intervention services, counseling and advocacy for survivors of sexual assault. Rape crisis advocates, including individuals who answer calls, have experience and expertise to provide necessary counseling and help survivors locate additional services.

"In the effort to combat sexual violence in Illinois and promote healing for survivors, it is critical that school-age students are aware of the rape crisis center services available in their communities," ICASA Executive Director Carrie Ward said. "ICASA applauds Attorney General Raoul for his leadership in this campaign. Sexual violence is way too common in the lives of students. Making them aware of the services provided at rape crisis centers and how these services can help them and their friends and loved ones to recover and thrive."

In addition to disseminating resources to schools, a representative from Raoul's office will serve on the Make SAFE Task Force, which was signed into law Aug. 23 to reform how sexual abuse is reported and investigated in schools. The task force will review best practices for preventing and addressing sexual and severe physical abuse in school-related settings or by school-related perpetrators and providing support for students who have experienced such abuse in a school-related setting or by a school-related perpetrator. The task force will report its findings to the governor and General Assembly on or before Sept. 15, 2020. The task force will also include legislators, the Illinois State Police, school district administrators, educators, children's advocacy centers, state's attorneys, and rape crisis centers.

The partnership with ICASA is part of Raoul's work to ensure survivors of sexual abuse and violence can access the support and resources that will facilitate their physical and emotional recoveries. As part of his

ongoing investigation into sexual abuse against children by priests and clergy in Illinois, Raoul's office operates a hotline for survivors to report incidents of sexual abuse and assault by clergy: 1-888-414-7678. The Attorney General's office also initiated the Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act, which requires Illinois' colleges and universities to develop clear policies and procedures for preventing and responding to instances of sexual violence.

For more information about free and confidential resources available to student survivors of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual assault in elementary and secondary schools, please visit the [Attorney General's website](#).