



Statement on Kennedy v. Louisiana Decision

The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV) supports the Supreme Court's decision to overturn the death penalty for child sexual assault cases. Victim advocates have long been concerned that the death penalty for child sexual assault cases could backfire and result in lower reporting rates and fewer convictions of sex offenders.

The issue of child sexual abuse is complex. Most child sexual abuse victims are abused by a family member or close family friend. The reality is that, child victims and their families may feel greater reluctance to come forward, knowing that doing so could effectively send a grandparent, cousin or long time family friend to death row. In addition, capital punishment trials are notoriously stressful for the witnesses involved, and typically face a lengthy appeals process. This forces the child witness to relive these painful events over and over again, severely disrupting their healing process.

Today we join sexual assault coalitions across the country in concurring with the Supreme Court's step toward ensuring that prosecutions of child sexual assault across our nation remain victim-centered and child-friendly in their approach. Our work, however, is not yet complete. We remain dedicated to finding effective ways to increase reporting rates, support victims, and keep communities and children across the nation safe.

The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence

The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV) works to end sexual violence and ensure services for victims. The NAESV Board of Directors consists of leaders of state sexual assault coalitions and national law, policy, and tribal experts who promote the organization's mission to advance and strengthen public policy on behalf of state coalitions, individuals, and other entities working to end sexual violence. Most importantly, the NAESV advocates on behalf of the victim/survivors—women, children and men—who have needlessly suffered the serious trauma of sexual violence and envisions a world free from sexual violence. Additional information about NAESV can be found at www.naesv.org.