



Policy Framework

As the state coalition, one of Jane Doe Inc.’s (JDI) highest priorities is to advocate for adequate state funding for community-based services to meet the needs of sexual and domestic violence survivors throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In conjunction with our budget advocacy, JDI advocates for best practices and responsive policies to support victims and survivors in the entirety of their lives.

JDI’s current policy efforts fall into three broad areas for advocacy and change: **Education/Prevention, Economic Justice,** and **Human Rights**. Legislation and policy efforts may fit into more than one of these categories. JDI engages in many areas of policy that affect the lives, choices, and safety of survivors. Some policy efforts will focus on specific provisions related to sexual and/or domestic violence; many will address broader policies that are critically important to the lives of survivors and their families and to supporting healthier and safer communities.

Key grounding principles

- JDI and our member programs work on behalf of all victims and survivors of sexual and domestic violence.
- Multiple factors affect survivors and contribute to further marginalization and victimization. These include, but are not limited to, sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia and ableism.
- Support of the most unserved, underserved and inadequately served individuals and communities will improve outcomes for all of those who experience violence in their lives. Focus on these communities will inform all policy efforts.
- In upholding the dignity and human rights of all people, we carefully assess the impact of public policy on oppressed communities that are disproportionately represented in and harmed by the criminal justice system.
- Adequate state funding is essential to support the life-saving (free and confidential) efforts of community-based sexual and domestic violence programs to support survivors and promote safe and violence-free communities.
- Our work cannot be achieved in a vacuum; it requires collaborations, partnerships and communications with multiple stakeholders.

Education and Prevention

A key strategy to ending sexual and domestic violence is to increase access to education and prevention resources so that sexual and domestic violence do not occur in the first place. This includes social norms change and broad-based education for youth, parents, educators, and all community members. Prevention and intervention are interconnected components of the work of community-based sexual and domestic violence organizations. Funding must be available for prevention efforts across the lifespan in order to reduce violence and to promote a vision for non-violence and equity.

2019-2020 Priorities:

DPH line item 4513-1131: Healthy Relationships Grant Program.....\$1,000,000
Funds for prevention programming in collaboration with DPH, community-based and school-based programs

An Act Relative to Sexual Violence on Higher Education Campuses ([S764/H1209](#))

Comprehensive legislation to address policy, prevention and services to student experiencing sexual assault at institutions of higher education. **Lead Sponsors:** Sen. Michael Moore and Rep. Tricia Farley-Bouvier

An Act Requiring Sexual Misconduct Surveys at Institutions of Higher Education ([S736/H1208](#)) Mandate campus sexual assault climate surveys at all institutions of higher education

Lead Sponsors: Sen. William Brownsberger and Rep. Lori Ehrlich

An Act Relative to Healthy Youth ([S263/H410](#))

Ensure that sexuality education, when taught, is age appropriate and medically accurate.

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Sal DiDomenico, Rep. James O'Day, and Rep. Paul Brodeur

Economic Justice and Anti-Poverty

Economic justice is critical for all individuals in the Commonwealth, including victims and survivors who face significant economic barriers after experiencing violence. Economic inequity and abuse is often a tool to disempower and trap survivors in abusive and unsafe situation. To remove these barriers, JDI supports a broad range of policy and legislative changes to improve survivors' access and outcomes related to employment, public benefits, housing, and health care.

2019-2020 Priorities:

An Act Relative to the Defense against Abusive Waivers ([S1049/H1625](#))

Prohibits the use of abusive "pre-dispute waivers" of important employee rights, including in cases of sexual harassment in workplaces. **Lead Sponsors:** Sen. Harriette Chandler and Rep. Kenneth Gordon

An Act Relative to Well-Being & Care of a Child (Lift the Cap on Kids) ([S37/H104](#))

Eliminating the harmful "family cap" on TAFDC which prohibits families receiving benefits for some children.

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Sal DiDomenico and Rep. Marjorie Decker

An Act to Lift Kids out of Deep Poverty ([S36/H102](#))

Set a floor on cash assistance at 50% of the federal poverty level

Lead sponsors: Sen Sal DiDomenico and Rep Marjorie Decker

On Solid Ground Coalition JDI is a member of OSG and supports the full policy agenda: <https://onsolidgroundma.org/>

Human Rights

Human rights for all people are essential to a world free of violence and oppression and to addressing societal inequities. Survivors who are members of communities of color, immigrant communities, LGBTQ/T communities, Muslim communities, and/or are persons living with disabilities, and other marginalized identities face additional barriers to accessing support, safety, and healing. In our current political climate, immigrant survivors from all communities and cultural backgrounds face heightened risk of deportation and detainment. Immigrant victims are more terrified than ever of calling police, seeking restraining orders or seeking other help when their communities are under attack. Language and cultural barriers exacerbate these challenges.

2019-2020 Priorities:

An Act to Protect the Civil Rights and Safety of All MA Residents (Safe Communities Act) ([S1401/H3573](#))

Preserve and restore community trust in police by separating law enforcement and immigration, making it safer for survivors to come forward to seek support and services.

Lead Sponsors: Sen. James B. Eldridge, Reps. Ruth Balsler and Liz Miranda

Other Systems Change

The above policy areas are not inclusive of all systems and issues that affect survivors in MA. JDI is committed to supporting institutional and structural changes that support survivors and promote safer and healthier communities.

Examples: Criminal justice reform; probate and family court advocacy for survivors

Additional Budget Request for FY2020

JDI advocates with and on behalf of all S/DV program in Massachusetts to ensure that local programs have resources to meet the needs of victims and survivors in their communities. In addition to the Healthy Relationships Grant Program budget request above, JDI is advocating for the following services funding:

DPH Line Item 4513-1130: Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Prevention and Treatment Services

\$37,835,747 (Governor's H1 proposal)

DPH Line item 4510-0810: Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) and Pediatric SANE

\$5,354,543 (Governor's H1 proposal)