



**Statement of Rachel Wright  
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**U.S. House Judiciary Committee  
Subcommittee on Crime and Federal Government Surveillance  
“Peace of Mind: Strengthening Victim Protections Under Kayleigh’s Law”**

**April 29, 2026**

Chairman Biggs, Ranking Member McBath, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee: thank you for inviting me to participate in today’s hearing on enhancing safeguards for victims of violent and sex-based crimes.

My name is Rachel Wright, and I am the National Policy Director of Right On Crime, a national criminal justice campaign of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, where we focus on conservative, data-driven solutions resulting in less crime, fewer victims, and safer communities. Prior to my role at Right On Crime, I served as Senior Counsel to Senator Chuck Grassley on the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee and represented the Commonwealth of Kentucky – my home state – as both a trial and appellate prosecutor.

As a prosecutor and policy expert on crime, criminal justice, and victims’ rights, I have seen firsthand the impact that a criminal charge and conviction can have on the parties involved. A verdict and sentence affect both the defendant and victim, their families, and their communities. But the physical and emotional pain of a crime does not end at sentencing. For many victims, especially those of violent and sexual crimes, the pain is long-lasting and uniquely damaging. Given the scope of violent and sex-based crimes – particularly against women – it is time for Congress to consider further opportunities to protect victims long term.

Globally, nearly 1 in 3 women aged 15 years and older has experienced physical or sexual violence.<sup>1</sup> And according to the most recent report on crime victimization by the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics, violent crime affected roughly 23 out of every 1,000 Americans in 2024 —amounting to millions of victims nationwide.<sup>2</sup>

The criminal justice system is only as strong as its ability to protect the most vulnerable and ensure that those harmed by crime are not unnecessarily re-traumatized by the very process intended to deliver justice. A common tool to protect these vulnerable populations is to limit – or prohibit – contact between the person who committed the crime and the victim.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/facts-and-figures/facts-and-figures-ending-violence-against-women#:~:text=women%20and%20girls-.Prevalence%20of%20violence%20against%20women%20and%20girls.0.2%20per%20cent%20annual%20decline.>

<sup>2</sup> <https://bjs.ojp.gov/document/cv24.pdf>



Currently, there are some avenues within the federal criminal code to limit contact between a defendant and a victim. Pending trial or when considering pretrial release, a federal judge may require the defendant to “avoid all contact with an alleged victim of the crime” or potential witnesses.<sup>3</sup> But before making this decision, the judge weighs several factors, including the nature of the crime, the history and characteristics of the defendant, and the danger the defendant would pose to the community if released.<sup>4</sup> Needless to say, these factors are incredibly discretionary.

After a criminal sentence is served and a defendant is on supervised release, a judge may order a defendant to stay away from certain places or people.<sup>5</sup> Specifically, if deemed appropriate, a judge will require a defendant to “refrain from frequenting specified kinds of places or from associating unnecessarily with specified persons[.]”<sup>6</sup> However, these protections are often temporary and aligned with the length of a defendant’s term of supervised release – typically three to five years for most offenses. And, like pretrial release determinations, these post-incarceration no-contact conditions are discretionary.

Discretion is a tool that, when wisely utilized, can benefit all parties and lead to efficient and effective criminal justice outcomes. But, when wielded or abused, judicial discretion often negatively impacts victims. It can lead to dangerous offenders being released pending trial. It can result in a criminal serving too short or too long of a sentence. And it can cause revictimization and additional crimes committed.

The proposal before this Committee seeks to mitigate and prevent revictimization, stop future crimes from happening, and ensure consistency across federal judicial circuits. Fashioned after “Kayleigh’s Law” passed in Arizona, this bill would impose lifetime injunctions for violent and sexual federal crimes. A no-contact order would remain in effect even after the defendant has completed his sentence and supervision.

The benefits of this policy are apparent.

First, it would reduce revictimization and recidivism. A lengthy injunction intends to bar a defendant from contacting a victim he violently or sexually attacked. This means that the victim is more likely to be permanently insulated from being targeted by this offender again. It would also seriously deter the offender from seeking to commit another crime. The potential impact is significant: fewer crimes, fewer victims, and safer communities.

Second, a federal “Kayleigh’s Law” would ensure a consistent approach among federal judges and judicial circuits on when no-contact orders are appropriate. The bill tailors the imposition of the lifetime injunction to violent crimes and federal sex crimes, eliminating the possibility that a judge

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<sup>3</sup> 18 U.S.C. § 3142(c)(1)(B)(v).

<sup>4</sup> 18 U.S.C. § 3142(g).

<sup>5</sup> 18 U.S.C. § 3563(b)(6).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*



in Arizona would rule differently than a judge in Georgia, Texas, or California. One of the tenants of federal criminal sentencing is uniformity.<sup>7</sup> Insofar as criminal sentences imposed on defendants should be consistent and uniform across federal courts, so should the impact on victims.

And lastly, this bill would complement ongoing state efforts to prioritize victim protection. “Kayleigh’s Law” was spearheaded in Arizona, but similar victim-centered policies are being seen in other states, too, such as Wisconsin<sup>8</sup>, Tennessee<sup>9</sup>, and California<sup>10</sup>. To be sure, a federal version of these policies would be markedly different. State courts may require no contact between two parties through domestic violence orders, temporary restraining orders, and emergency protection orders. These injunctions are typically handed down through family law courts, which are uniquely within the jurisdiction of state law. There is no federal analogue. And ordinarily in the states, victims must make recurring requests to the court for extensions of these protective orders, sometimes as frequently as every 1-2 years. This federal proposal, then, mimics the unique structure of Arizona’s law by making the no-contact order part of the criminal sentence itself. It is distinctly different from family law and state civil law protection orders. But its structure – by tying the no-contact mandate to the criminal sentence itself – would accomplish a similar outcome.

True justice should not be measured just by the length of a prison sentence, but by the restoration of the survivor. By providing this permanent peace of mind, victims will be empowered to move forward with their lives without fear. Right On Crime applauds this Committee’s longstanding dedication to ensuring better outcomes for victims, reforming offenders when safe to do so, and reducing crime. We look forward to working with the authors of this bill to ensure the language is meticulously crafted and responsive to this necessary issue.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and to Congressman Hamadeh for his leadership on this legislation. I look forward to your questions.

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<https://www.ussc.gov/#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20Sentencing%20Commission%2C%20a,the%20basics%20of%20federal%20sentencing>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/related/acts/256>

<sup>9</sup> <https://law.justia.com/codes/tennessee/title-36/chapter-3/part-6/section-36-3-627/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://legiscan.com/CA/text/SB1395/id/3371513>; see also <https://legiscan.com/CA/text/AB1931/2023>.