



United to end sexual abuse,
assault, and harassment

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Respect Together Statement on New York Appeals Court Over- turning Harvey Weinstein's Rape Conviction

We are disheartened on behalf of all survivors following the 4-3 decision today by the New York Court of Appeals overturning Harvey Weinstein's 2020 conviction on felony sex crime charges.

This decision reflects the vast challenges survivors face in seeking justice through the criminal legal system. It underscores how elusive accountability is for people who commit sexual abuse, assault, and harassment. This is especially true when people who commit abuse are in a position of power, with limitless social and financial resources at their disposal to leverage against broken systems and shield themselves from accountability.

We cannot let a single case outcome be seen as a measure of #MeToo and the movement against sexual abuse, assault, and harassment. Instead, it underscores that barriers still exist despite the immense progress of a movement that has shifted public understanding and empowered survivors. #MeToo grew out of our society's failure to respond to the needs and experiences of survivors, and the movement will still have strength and purpose until healing and justice are more accessible to all survivors of sexual abuse, assault, and harassment.

Weinstein's conviction in this case was significant because it is truly rare for cases of rape and sexual assault to reach an outcome of conviction. For this conviction to be overturned reminds us that, while the criminal legal system is an important avenue for some survivors to seek justice and healing, it cannot be the only one. This decision is unfortunately not a surprise as the criminal legal system repeatedly fails survivors of sexual abuse, assault, and harassment at

every stage in the process – reporting, evidence collection, investigation, charges, prosecution, conviction, and appeal. As dissenting Judge Madeline Singas, aptly said, “this Court [New York Appeals Court] continues to thwart the steady gains survivors of sexual violence have fought for in our criminal justice system.”

The decision to overturn Weinstein’s conviction was made in the last few days of Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), a national campaign to educate and engage the public in addressing this widespread issue. SAAM marks a time when survivors' voices should be honored and celebrated – not discounted and dismissed. Even when the criminal legal system fails, we must remember that we can show up as communities and advocate for survivors to be believed and supported. Change is only possible when we all stand together, united to end sexual abuse, assault, and harassment.

We support all survivors in their journey to heal and continue to advocate for a more fair and equitable judicial system. Survivors deserve more and better options. Survivors deserve to feel hope. Our work will not rest until survivors of sexual abuse, assault, and harassment have the access and options they deserve.

ABOUT RESPECT TOGETHER

Together with its main divisions, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC) and the Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect (PCAR), Respect Together supports survivors, promotes research, identifies best practices, and shapes public policy. Our mission is to disrupt inequity and mobilize service providers, communities, and leaders to create and uphold safe, equitable communities with a culture of respect for all people.