



Every Step Of The Way

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81 South 19th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203
P: (412) 431-5665 | F: (412) 431-0913

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pennsylvania Rape Crisis Centers Face Collapse Amid 100+ Day Budget Impasse

PITTSBURGH, PA — On Thursday, October 16, at 10:00 a.m., the **Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect (PCAR)** and **Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR)** will hold a joint press conference to demand immediate action from state lawmakers as Pennsylvania's budget impasse surpasses 100 days—leaving all 47 rape crisis centers across the Commonwealth without critical funding.

The event, representing every rape crisis center in Pennsylvania, will take place at **City-County Building Portico 414 Grant Street, Pittsburgh PA 15219**, and will feature advocates, legislators, and survivors sharing the human cost of government inaction.

For more than three months, Pennsylvania's rape crisis centers—lifelines for survivors of sexual assault and abuse—have gone unpaid due to the state's failure to pass a budget. This marks **over 100 days with zero funding**, following **five consecutive years of flat funding with no instate support**.

"Survivors should never become collateral damage in political gridlock," said **Sadie Restivo, Executive Director of Pittsburgh Action Against Rape**. "For 100 days, our centers have been forced to make impossible choices—cutting staff, reducing hours, and closing programs. Survivors can't and shouldn't wait on Harrisburg to act."

Across the state, centers are being pushed to the brink. In Philadelphia, the city's only rape crisis center has nearly already closed its doors. Others are laying off advocates, reducing hours, and eliminating programs that support survivors through counseling, advocacy, and prevention education.

"Survivors deserve better. In Mercer County, I've had to move my entire staff to part-time just to keep our doors open," said **Megan McConahy, Executive Director of AWARE (Mercer County Rape Crisis Center)**. "We are rationing care for survivors. This is a direct result of the state budget impasse. We would not be in this position if the budget had been passed on time."

Yolanda Edrington, CEO of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, emphasized the statewide impact: "Rape crisis centers serve more than 26,000 survivors each year, one-third of whom are children. We provide 24-hour hotlines, medical advocacy, counseling, and prevention programs that save lives. Without funding, survivors have nowhere to turn—and the trauma only deepens."

The press conference will also feature remarks from **Senator Lindsey Williams (D-Allegheny)**, who has championed an \$8 million increase to the Department of Human Services Rape Crisis line item. She will urge immediate action to release funds and increase the state's investment in sexual assault services.

Survivor **Maria Gardner** will share her personal story underlying what's at stake when centers lose funding. "Survivors can't go another day without help," Gardner says. "I am here today because a rape crisis center was there for me in a way no one else could be. These services save lives."

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The official registration and financial information of Pittsburgh Action Against Rape may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll-free, within PA, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

EVENT DETAILS

WHAT: Press Conference – *“Pennsylvania Rape Crisis Centers Face Collapse Amid 100+ Day Budget Impasse”*

WHO:

- *Sadie Restivo*, Executive Director, Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR)
- *Yolanda Edrington*, CEO, Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect (PCAR)
- *Megan McConahy*, Executive Director, AWARE – Mercer County Rape Crisis Center
- *Maria Gardner*, Survivor, Writer and Advocate
- *Senator Lindsey Williams* (D–Allegheny)

WHEN: Thursday, October 16, 2025 – 10:00 a.m.

WHERE: City-County Building 414 Grant Street Pittsburgh PA 15219 (PORTICO)

About PAAR and PCAR

Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR) has served Allegheny County since 1972, and is the sole rape crisis center for Allegheny County. Providing free, confidential services to more than 2500 survivors of sexual violence, including counseling, advocacy, and education every year.

The Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect (PCAR) is the statewide division of Respect Together. PCAR partners with a network of rape crisis centers that serve all 67 counties in the commonwealth providing support to survivors and promoting safe, respectful communities.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

PAAR CONTACT

Sadie Restivo

Executive Director, Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR)
724-825-8264; sadier@paar.net

PCAR CONTACT

Laura Palumbo

Communications, Respect Together
717-256-8246; lpalumbo@nsvrc-respecttogether.org