

From: [Mary Ellen Stone, M.S.](#)
To: [KCC - Committee Assistants \(Email Group\)](#)
Subject: for Public Record: regarding online access to youth legal records via the Court's SCRIPT system
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KCSARC's role as victim advocates within the legal system allows us to witness firsthand that process through a victim's perspective. We help guide and support our clients through a system and process that requires them, at every step of the way, to be visible and to navigate an invasiveness from reporting through a trial and beyond. **The rights of defendants and the public's right to open courts are important foundational principles and for many victims these rights often feel in direct conflict with their own need for privacy.**

The requirement to be visible is not limited to adult victims; children and youth who are victims are also not afforded privacy or protection from public scrutiny.

In January 2021 KCSARC conducted a review of sexual assault cases in the court backlog. At that time, we were able to identify 408 victims who had waited almost 2 years for their case to move forward. The average age of these victims was 16 in January 2021. They were almost two years younger when they were assaulted.

Every day, victims risk the potential invasions of privacy and loss of control over very personal and traumatic experiences because they believe reporting and participating in the legal process may prevent others from being victimized. Many also believe reporting is a responsibility and the value a system that is both open and fair in its pursuit of justice.

When we consider the proposal to provide protection and privacy to juveniles accused of crimes we ask, "Where is the concern for the lack of protection and loss of privacy for minor victims?" How can a system be viewed as fair if these protections are only considered for those who have been accused of causing harm and not the individuals who never chose to be part of this process? True reform would acknowledge the rights of victims in this process as well as those of those who are accused of harm.

We ask that as you consider protections and privacy that you keep needs of victims, many of whom are minors, in mind.

Mary Ellen Stone, M.S.

Executive Director | Pronouns: She / Her

King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KCSARC) | kcsarc.org

A partner agency of the King County Crime Victim Service Center

O: [425.226.5062](tel:425.226.5062) | D: [425.282.0354](tel:425.282.0354) | E: mstone@kcsarc.org

24-Hour Resource Line: 888.99.VOICE (86423)

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Mary Ellen Stone, M.S.

Executive Director | Pronouns: She / Her

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O:[425.226.5062](tel:425.226.5062) | D:[425.282.0354](tel:425.282.0354) | E:mstone@kcsarc.org