

## NEWS

## MVA Attorney Sarah Byrne contributes to report on legal deserts, published by The Avery Center and National Survivor Law Collective

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MVA Human Trafficking Pro Bono Project leader and National Survivor Law Collective co-founder Sarah Byrne recently contributed to the Avery Center-led report titled, "Legal Deserts Report - Accessing Legal Services for the Survivors of Sex Trafficking." The Avery Center, formerly Free Our Girls, was founded in 2014 to address the gap in direct services for adults experiencing commercial sex trafficking across the United States. The National Survivor Law Collective formed in 2020 to establish the network of lawyers, agencies and firms that provide free legal services to survivors of human trafficking.

The Report addresses human trafficking victim legal needs and gaps across the country, concluding that "survivors are often unable to access the legal assistance that would allow them to realize their rights." The hopeful trends reported include *"the growing number of private law firms devoting significant resources to providing pro bono representation to trafficking survivors."* The Report went on to note that *"the Moore & Van Allen Pro Bono Project in Charlotte, North Carolina has represented survivors in over 300 matters ranging from expunction of criminal records, to victim-witness advocacy in investigations and prosecutions against traffickers, to custody, name change, credit repair and immigration assistance. This program has over 200 legal professionals devoted to supporting survivors and regularly trains other lawyers and law firms on delivering the same pro bono services. Trauma-informed, competent private lawyers can help ensure that every survivor has a pro bono lawyer to advocate for their legal needs."*

For the complete Avery Center report, [click here](#). For more information about MVA's Human Trafficking Pro Bono Project, [click here](#).