

NOVEMBER 4, 2020 BY **CHRISTINE RAINO**

# After 10 Years, We Are Changing How We Grade States

Ten years ago, when Shared Hope developed the nation's first legal framework to comprehensively analyze state laws addressing the crime of child sex trafficking, our **field research on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking** had indicated that there were fundamental gaps that needed to be addressed in states' laws. That was confirmed when we launched the inaugural **Protected Innocence Challenge Report Cards** in 2011 and the majority of states received an "F" grade. At that point many states' laws failed to even recognize the crime of child sex trafficking. Over the last 10 years, we have been working to lay the foundation for transformational policy, practice, and cultural change by supporting state legislators and stakeholders to enact the minimum fabric of laws needed to address this heinous crime. Now, 10 years later, no state receives an "F" grade and a majority of the country receives an "A" or "B" on their report card. The Protected Innocence Challenge project was our vision for mobilizing collective state action to ensure national change. Ten years of grassroots mobilization, advocacy, technical assistance, and consistent collaboration has allowed this vision to become reality. All states now have a child sex trafficking law and, collectively, the country has made exciting progress to provide imperative protections and access to specialized services for child survivors.

**49 STATES**

RAISED THEIR GRADES

FROM 2011 TO 2019

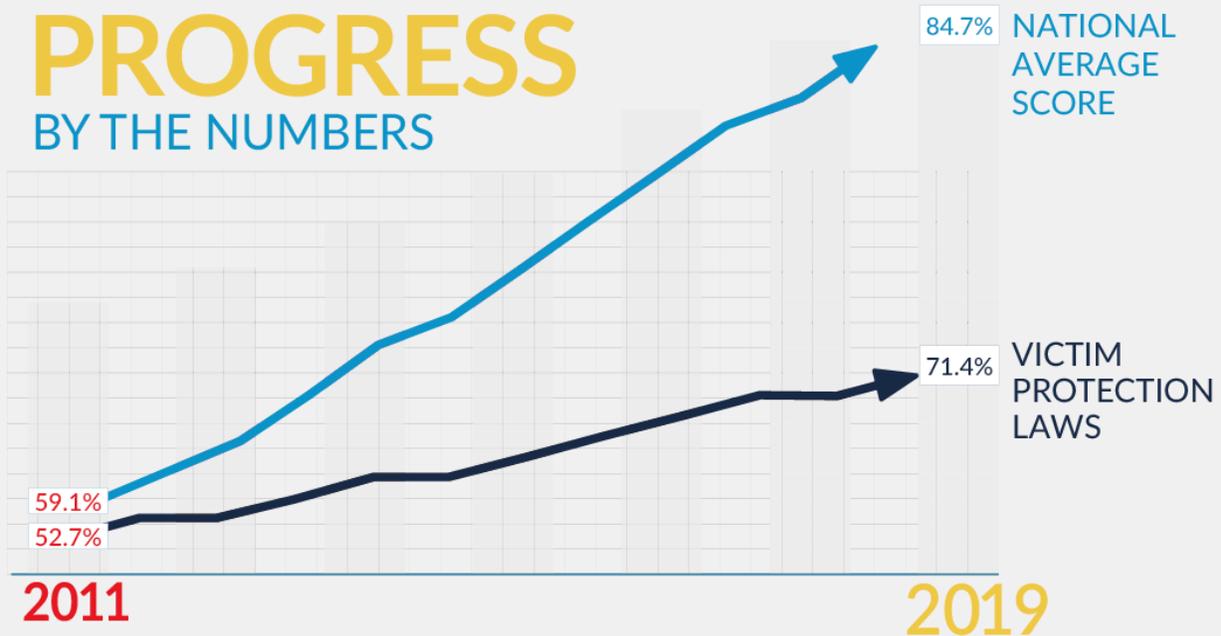


However, 10 years has also led to new research and opportunities to listen to survivors, providing waves of information that require us to confront where we are and where we should be going. What we have heard, and responded to, is a call to raise the bar for states...to build on the foundation of progress by further improving protections for child sex trafficking victims. On November 18th, we will release an advanced legislative framework for the **Report Cards on Child & Youth Sex Trafficking**, which will be the basis for new state grades beginning in the fall of 2021. This advanced framework will build on the original framework, preserving the most fundamental components while including new policy priorities that reflect feedback and research from the field.



One noteworthy change that reflects cultural and legislative transformations is the advanced framework's shift in focus; in 2011, 75% of the framework focused on criminalizing trafficking offenders, including traffickers, buyers, and facilitators, with the remaining 25% focused on victim protections laws. Recognizing that most states have enacted the keystone statutes – the basic laws necessary for criminalizing offenders – the framework's focus will shift to focus on the area where the largest gaps remain – victim protections. Under the advanced framework for the Report Cards on Child & Youth Sex Trafficking, 75% of the policies will address critical victim protections, including access to specialized services, non-criminal responses to survivors, and avenues to comprehensive care and justice – with the remaining 25% focused on criminal accountability for offenders, and victim-centered tools for law enforcement and prosecutors.

# PROGRESS BY THE NUMBERS



Additionally, this advanced framework will offer extra credit opportunities for state laws that recognize the intersection of child sex trafficking and labor trafficking as well as the impact on youth and young adults. These advancements in the framework are the product of years of input from the field and the expertise of survivors, as well as Shared Hope's own research and advocacy. We are truly grateful for the collaboration of our state partners over the years, and **highly value the incredible work that state advocates have done to help us build this foundation of laws!** We are confident that, together, we can better protect those exploited through trafficking and continue working towards true prevention of this crime.

We invite you to attend the **release of the advanced legislative framework for the Report Cards on Child & Youth Sex Trafficking on November 18 at 1:30pm EDT**. You can also sign up **here** to receive the new report and advanced legislative framework as soon as **it's available on 11/18!**

**Additionally, to support implementation of the advanced framework for Report Cards on Child & Youth Sex Trafficking, our team will remain available to provide rapid, technical assistance to support legislators, advocates, and state agencies; technical assistance requests can be submitted **here**.**

We are thrilled to be starting this next chapter in advancing state laws and we hope you can join us in this effort!

# REPORT CARDS TIMELINE **2010-2020**

A look at the last ten years

