

## **Network for Victim Recovery of DC (NVRDC) Support DC's Revised Criminal Code Act.**

Our organization [supported the Revised Criminal Code Act](#) (RCCA) because its development and intended impacts align with the [5 trauma-informed principles](#) that are required when creating victim-centered experiences.

1. **Choice** - The diversity of victims' desires matters because healing is not, and cannot, be a one-size fits all approach. We feel strongly that the RCCA allows for greater flexibility in what victims can represent as their preference related to sentencing and rehabilitation, which in turn creates the space for victims to become more active participants.
2. **Empowerment** - Much of the research we have on victim satisfaction in the criminal legal system has found that victims who are afforded rights on paper, only to be denied them in practice, are more likely to have a negative experience with the criminal justice system. The elimination of mandatory minimum sentences, as seen in the RCCA, is integral to preserving victims' rights, as it allows courts to consider how a victim defines justice, rather than being forced to hand down a sentence as prescribed by a 121-year-old statute.
3. **Safety** - Contrary to the distorted narrative that harsh sentences enhance community safety, the first-ever national [survey of victims' views](#) on criminal justice, commissioned by Alliance for Safety and Justice, found that victims of violent crime widely support reducing incarceration to invest in prevention and rehabilitation. By a margin of 3 to 1, victims preferred alternatives to incarceration, such as mental health treatment, drug treatment, community supervision, and community service.

As an organization that supports many of the needs of crime victims, we do not see the solutions to our clients' problems being in prescribed sentences or antiquated laws but instead in wider system transparency and accountability. We need to look at how the laws that claim to protect victims on paper, like the Crime Victims' Rights Act (CVRA), are failing them in practice. If the concerns about the District's safety and crime victims are sincere, meaningful CVRA reform that mandates system accountability is a change that would significantly and directly lead to their betterment.