

# Robbed of Innocence

By: Beth Blackman  
Women's Center of  
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At age 15, Robin was a normal teenage girl. She got along well with her family, was popular and had many plans for her future. She wanted nothing to get in her way, so she decided at a young age she would remain

a virgin until she found someone special. All her plans came to an abrupt end when a friend of the family decided to rape her.

A few weeks later, she discovered she was pregnant as a result of the rape. She had many concerns about her health, her new financial responsibilities, and becoming a mother at such a young age

due to such a violent assault.

With the help of a Victim Advocate from the Rape Recovery Team, Robin was able to file and receive assistance from Victim's Compensation and both she and her family received counseling. The Advocate followed her through the entire judicial system and the strong bond they formed gave

her strength. The Advocate was there when the perpetrator was sentenced to 15 years and she was there for the birth of Robin's baby girl.

A year later Robin is continuing counseling, she has returned to school and is making good grades. She still has plans for college, and is adapting to being a single teenage mother.

## Criminal Justice Terminology

Often terms/abbreviations are used throughout the Justice Coalition's Victims' Advocate that not everyone knows. In this section, every month, we will attempt to explain or give definitions of some of those ambiguous terms.

### ADMINISTRATOR

One who administers the estate of a person who dies without leaving a will; a court official.

### ADVERSARY

The opposite party in a criminal action.

### AFFIDAVIT

A written statement of facts made under oath before a notary or court officer having the authority to administer oaths.

### AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES

A series of factors listed in the Code of Criminal Justice, which must be considered by the sentencing court when imposing sentence. These factors are weighed with the mitigating circumstances, in a quantitative and qualitative analysis, in order to achieve a balance. That balance determines whether the sentencing court keeps a sentence at the Criminal Code's presumptive term for the particular offense or whether it allows the court the discretion to either raise or lower that term from the presumptive sentence.

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## What is the Jimmy Ryce Act

By: Regina Durfee

It is an act passed by the Florida Legislature to provide long-term treatment and care in a secure setting for Sexually Violent Predators. The law is found in Chapter 394 of the Florida Statutes (Sections 394.910-394.931).

A "Sexually Violent Predator" is one who has been convicted of a sexually violent offense and who suffers from a mental abnormality or personality disorder that makes the person likely to engage in future acts of sexual violence if not confined for long-term treatment. Recognizing that Sexually Violent Predators are not amenable to existing short-term mental illness procedures, the Legislature enacted the Jimmy Ryce Act in 1998 to take effect on January 1, 1999.

The law is named for Jimmy Ryce, a nine-

year-old boy who lived in rural S.W. Miami-Dade County. In September of 1995, the young boy was abducted at gunpoint after he got off his school bus. A nearby ranch worker, Juan Carlos Chavez, later told police that he had taken Jimmy to his trailer, raped him and shot him when he tried to escape. Chavez then dismembered the Victim's body and buried it. The parents of Jimmy Ryce happened to be attorneys and they helped write the law and advance it through the Florida Legislature.

Florida is one of approximately fifteen states with similar civil commitment proceedings. The State Attorney's Office pursues these proceedings on behalf of the State of Florida and the Public Defender's Office represents those the State is seeking to commit.

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