



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Marsy's Law for Wisconsin Earns Support of More than 100 Police Chiefs**

*New endorsements from law enforcement leaders add to growing coalition*

**MADISON** – Today, Marsy's Law for Wisconsin announced that more than 100 Chiefs of Police from communities across the state have joined the effort to update Wisconsin's constitution to secure the rights of crime victims. Prominent endorsements from leaders within the law enforcement community have proven integral to the bipartisan statewide coalition of support, which now boasts over [200 key endorsements](#).

"Wisconsin has been at the forefront of protecting the rights of crime victims for many years, and Marsy's Law for Wisconsin is working to ensure those rights are strengthened in the state Constitution," said Chief Ryan Vossekuil of the Mayville Police Department. "I'm proud to have endorsed this grassroots effort to support crime victims, and even more proud that law enforcement is helping lead the way."

In addition to the impressive list of endorsements from Wisconsin Police Chiefs, Marsy's Law for Wisconsin has earned the [support](#) of all of the state's prominent law enforcement organizations, including the Wisconsin Association of Women Police, Fraternal Order of Police, Wisconsin District Attorneys Association, the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association, the Badger State Sheriffs' Association, the Wisconsin Troopers' Association, and many more. These groups have joined the broad and growing bipartisan coalition including survivors, victims' rights advocates, legal experts, and others supporting equal rights for crime victims.

"I'm honored to join a long and impressive list of law enforcement leaders who have stepped forward to advance victims' rights in the state," said Winnebago County Sheriff John F. Matz. "Wisconsin was the first state in the country to pass a Crime Victims' Bill of Rights, and Marsy's Law for Wisconsin expands on those protections with strong support among law enforcement."

Marsy's Law for Wisconsin, introduced as Assembly Joint Resolution 47/Senate Joint Resolution 53, is authored by Senator Van Wanggaard (R-Racine) and Representative Todd Novak (R-Dodgeville). With broad support from lawmakers of both parties, the legislation passed through the State Senate and Assembly in 2017, and will now move forward to second consideration in the next legislative session.

**You can see a full list of Marsy's Law for Wisconsin's more than 200 endorsements [here](#) and find facts on our bipartisan legislation below:**

- **Marsy's Law for Wisconsin follows a proud tradition in our state of protecting victims' rights, unlike many other states.** Wisconsin already has a constitutional amendment on victims' rights that passed in 1993, and was the first state in the nation to pass a Crime Victims' Bill of Rights. The state also is recognized as having some of the strongest statutory rights for victims in the country. This means the changes we are proposing are about making sure victims' rights are truly equal alongside the constitutional rights of the accused – nothing more, nothing less.
- **Marsy's Law for Wisconsin strengthens rights that already exist in Wisconsin.** The proposed amendment would do two things: Elevate certain rights currently under state statute to be fully constitutional rights, and build upon and strengthen other rights that are already part of the Constitution. An example of a right that is the law under state statute but needs to be elevated to the Constitution is the right to put victim restitution payments ahead of any dollars owed to the government. An example of a current constitutional right that needs clarification is the right to be heard throughout the legal process, including release, plea, sentencing, disposition, parole, revocation, expungement, or pardon – as opposed to just disposition.
- **Nearly 80 percent of Wisconsinites support updating our state Constitution to ensure equal rights for crime victims.** A poll of Wisconsinites found that nearly 80 percent support updating our state Constitution to ensure equal rights for crime victims. More than 80 percent support a victim's right to speak up at more points in the criminal justice process, and 68 percent said they were "more likely" to support a state legislative candidate who supported Marsy's Law for Wisconsin. The bipartisan legislation must be passed in the state Legislature twice, then by voters at the ballot box.

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### **About Marsy's Law for Wisconsin**

Marsy's Law for Wisconsin is a grassroots coalition that has developed a unique proposal to give victims of crime equal rights in our state, building on Wisconsin's laws and history of leading on this issue. Marsy's Law is named after Marsalee "Marsy" Nicholas of California who was stalked and killed by her ex-boyfriend in 1983. Only one week after her death, Marsy's mother and brother, Henry T. Nicholas, walked into a grocery store where they were confronted by the accused

murderer. The family, who had just come from a visit to Marsy's grave, was unaware that the accused had been released on bail. In an effort to honor his sister, Dr. Nicholas has made it his life's mission to give victims and their families constitutional protections and equal rights.