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**Marsy's Law for Wisconsin Passes Key State Senate Committee**

*Second consideration of bipartisan victims' rights legislation approved by Senate Committee on  
Judiciary and Public Safety*

Legislation to update Wisconsin's state Constitution to ensure equal rights for crime victims has cleared a key State Senate committee in the first weeks of the 2019 legislative session. Introduced for second consideration as [Assembly Joint Resolution 1/Senate Joint Resolution 2](#), the proposal, known as Marsy's Law for Wisconsin, was authored by State Senators Van Wanggaard (R-Racine) and Tim Carpenter (D-Milwaukee) and State Representatives Todd Novak (R-Dodgeville) and David Crowley (D-Milwaukee) with more than 50 listed cosponsors from both sides of the aisle.

Last week, the legislation received a joint public hearing before the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety and Assembly Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committees, where victims, advocates, law enforcement and other supporters delivered powerful personal stories in testimony for the legislation. The bill cleared the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee today and is scheduled to be acted on by the Assembly Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee tomorrow. Supporters of the bill are hoping the measure will go before the full Senate and Assembly for approval next week.

The bipartisan proposal to strengthen the rights of crime victims passed the Legislature with overwhelming bipartisan support last year. In order to amend the state Constitution a proposed amendment must pass the Legislature in two consecutive sessions and then be put to the voters for ratification. The bill must pass both chambers by January 22 in order to be placed on this coming April's ballot.

Earlier this month, the grassroots organization announced the launch of an extensive radio and digital advertising campaign on top of robust ongoing advocacy efforts. The group has followed these efforts with the rollout of their "Voices for Victims" video campaign, highlighting a series of

testimonial-style videos from survivors, victim advocates, and law enforcement leaders talking about why they personally support the proposal. These efforts are aimed at ensuring that Marsy's Law for Wisconsin can be before voters during the April 2, 2019 election.

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**You can find facts on Marsy's Law for Wisconsin's 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 strengthen other rights that are already part of the Constitution.
- **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.

### **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.

Victims and supporters interested in sharing their stories can email [Wisconsin@marsyslaw.us](mailto:Wisconsin@marsyslaw.us).