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**Marsy's Law for Wisconsin Passes Key State Senate Committee  
Passes State Assembly Committee With Overwhelming Bipartisan Support**

*Second consideration of bipartisan victims' rights legislation clears legislative committees, available for scheduling before full Senate and Assembly*

**MADISON** – Legislation to update Wisconsin's state Constitution to ensure equal rights for crime victims has cleared legislative committees in the Wisconsin State Senate and Assembly and is now available for scheduling for a floor vote in each chamber. 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.

The bill was approved by the Assembly Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee on a bipartisan 10-2 vote after clearing the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee yesterday. Last week, the legislation received a joint public hearing before both committees, where victims, advocates, law enforcement and other supporters delivered powerful personal stories in testimony for the legislation. Supporters of the bill are hoping the measure will go before the full Senate and Assembly for approval next week.

Teri Jendusa-Nicolai, State Chair for Marsy's Law for Wisconsin and the survivor of a brutal attack by her ex-husband, released the following statement after the vote:

"I am living proof of why we need to level the playing field between victims of crime and the accused, and I'd like to thank Representatives Novak and Crowley, Senators Wanggaard and Carpenter, all of our supporters, and each of the lawmakers from both sides of the aisle who stood up today to help move us one step closer to making equal rights for crime victims a reality in Wisconsin."

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.

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You can read Teri's story of survival [here](#), and 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.

