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Bi-partisan Group of Legislators Introduce Bill to Prevent Teen Dating Violence

Madison— Domestic violence victim advocates across Wisconsin are strongly supporting newly introduced legislation aimed at preventing teen dating violence in Wisconsin schools. LRB-2213/1, authored by Representatives Joel Kleefisch (R-Oconomowoc) and Melissa Sargent (D-Madison), would direct schools to create curriculum for middle and high students focused on recognizing the signs of an abusive relationship. It would also require schools to create policies and training for staff to handle incidences of dating violence.

“Teen Dating Violence is a public health crisis, and End Abuse is thrilled to see the Wisconsin legislature take steps to address this problem. One in three teens in the US is a victim of physical, emotional or verbal abuse from a dating partner, a rate that is higher than all other forms of youth violence,” said Patti Seger, executive director of End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin. “Considering that there are at least 22 states that already have laws requiring curriculum on teen dating violence in schools, we urge the legislature to take interpersonal violence seriously and pass this bill. At End Abuse we are committed to breaking the cycle of violence that affects victims in every community, and that means starting early with preventive education.”

LRB-2213/1, which was circulated for co-sponsorship earlier today, would require school boards to adopt policies addressing teen dating violence, including:

- Prohibiting teen dating violence at schools or school-related events and activities;
- Model, age-appropriate instruction about preventing and responding to teen dating violence for pupils in grades 7 through 12;
- Training and procedures for identifying, preventing, and responding to teen dating violence for school district employees, and identifying school district employees responsible for receiving teen dating violence incident reports.

“We applaud the bi-partisan work of legislators to support this vital initiative, including the lead authors and Representative John Spiros (R-Marshfield), who has worked on the legislation in previous sessions and remains a strong supporter of the bill,” said Seger. “We look forward to full support from the Legislature. By coming together to support this common sense proposal, elected officials in Wisconsin will demonstrate that teen dating violence is not a partisan issue and that they are serious about addressing the root causes of domestic violence.”

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End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin: The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence is the leading voice for victims of domestic abuse in Wisconsin. At End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin, we educate shelter and program volunteers and advocates, law enforcement, legislators, and community members to provide safety and support to survivors. We strive to shift Wisconsin from the attitudes and beliefs that cause domestic violence to values of mutual respect and equality, and we partner with communities in the effort to prevent and end domestic abuse. We encourage reporters to include the National Domestic Violence Hotline number [1-800-799-SAFE(7233)] in their stories for victims who need help. A list of local Wisconsin domestic violence victim service providers can be found at <http://www.endabusewi.org>.