



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Marsy's Law for Wisconsin Earns Support From Victim Advocates**

*Array of new endorsements from victim advocacy organizations add to growing coalition*

**MADISON** – Marsy's Law for Wisconsin today announced new endorsements from several prominent victim advocacy organizations from communities across Wisconsin, demonstrating continued momentum in the effort's bipartisan statewide coalition. In addition to the growing [list](#) of key endorsements from victim service groups, elected officials, law enforcement leaders, and statewide associations, Marsy's Law for Wisconsin has garnered significant public support across the state, with thousands signing the petition backing of the effort. These new endorsements mark significant growth to an already impressive list of support from Wisconsin's victim advocacy community for Marsy's Law for Wisconsin.

"Marsy's law provides victims with the opportunity to use their voice and find strength on a path of healing," said Barb Fischer, Executive Director of Advocates of Ozaukee, a domestic and sexual violence prevention organization among the new members of Marsy's Law for Wisconsin's growing grassroots coalition. "It allows victims to become informed and involved in the ultimate outcome, allowing them to feel more empowered."

Also among the new endorsing organizations is Women and Children's Horizons, a Kenosha-based advocacy organization for victims of domestic and sexual violence. "As advocates, we must protect the rights of survivors. Marsy's Law empowers crime victims and Women and Children's Horizons is proud to support its efforts." Said Diana Newton, the organization's Executive Director.

These organizations join a number of other prominent groups statewide which have recently endorsed Marsy's Law for Wisconsin's bipartisan effort. Among the other recent prominent endorsements are UNIDOS of Wisconsin and the Rape Crisis Center of Dane County, two of the foremost advocacy organizations in the Madison area. Other groups that have previously endorsed

include Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Sojourner Family Peace Center, and Golden House of Green Bay.

“I’m thrilled to see a large number of victim advocacy organizations joining the fight to strengthen victims’ rights,” said Luke Martz, Marsy’s Law for Wisconsin State Director. “These incredible organizations are on the front lines every day—working with crime victims and helping to turn them into survivors. We couldn’t be prouder to have their support.”

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.

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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).

Marsy's Law for Wisconsin can be found on our website, Twitter, and Facebook at: