

Marcy's Law for Wisconsin: Will make a difference for victims

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MADISON – Legislation to update Wisconsin's Constitution to ensure equal rights for crime victims has cleared first consideration in the Legislature after passing both the State Senate and Assembly early this month with overwhelming support from lawmakers of both parties.

See what our supporters are saying about our recent legislative victory:
Teri Jendusa Nicolai, Marsy's Law for Wisconsin state chairwoman in the Racine Journal Times: "As a survivor of violent crime, I'd like to take a moment this holiday season to express my sincere thanks to Senator Wanggaard for voting for Marsy's Law for Wisconsin. His support means the world to survivors like me, and to all of those who have joined the fight to better Wisconsin's communities... It's not that often that lawmakers of both parties are able to so overwhelmingly agree on something. I hope you'll join me in thanking them for standing up for survivors and making our communities safer."

Keaira Stine, Marsy's Law for Wisconsin supporter and childhood abuse survivor in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: "As a victim of childhood sexual assault, I was deeply grateful to see that the Wisconsin legislature recently approved Marsy's Law for Wisconsin with broad bipartisan support... I didn't have a choice when I became a victim of sexual assault. But today I choose to stand up for equal rights for crime victims because I know it will help keep our children and communities safe. I want to thank the 110 lawmakers who chose to stand with us in support of Marsy's Law for Wisconsin."

Senator Van Wanggaard, Marsy's Law for Wisconsin bill author in the Racine Journal Times: "We don't always think about what the victim is going through... If you've ever been a victim of a crime or you know of a family member or close friend that's been a victim of a crime, it can be pretty devastating."

Wisconsin Assembly Speaker Robin Vos in the Racine Journal Times: "I think we have always been considered one of the leaders nationwide in doing everything we can to balance out the rights of the defendants against those who are the victims of the crimes... (Marsy's Law) takes a lot of those protections and puts it permanently in the (state) constitution."

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 a broad and growing bipartisan statewide coalition supporting it, the legislation will now move forward to second consideration in the next legislative session.

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.