

# Marsy's Law for Wisconsin: Bipartisan legislation passes in Assembly

Posted on Thursday, Nov 9, 2017

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Madison, Wisconsin – Legislation to update our state Constitution to ensure equal rights for crime victims has cleared first consideration in the Legislature after passing the State Assembly today with broad bipartisan support. The measure was approved in the State Senate earlier this week and will now move forward to second consideration in the next legislative session.

The legislation, introduced as Assembly Joint Resolution 47/Senate Joint Resolution 53, was authored by State Sen. Van Wanggaard (R-Racine) and State Rep. Todd Novak (R-Dodgeville). Teri Jendusa-Nicolai, the survivor of a brutal attack by her ex-husband and one of the state's most prominent victims' rights advocates, released the following statement after this week's votes:

"I'm thrilled that our lawmakers have once again overwhelmingly demonstrated their support for survivors like myself by advancing Marsy's Law for Wisconsin in both houses of the Legislature. My experience and those of so many other victims clearly demonstrated the need to level the playing field between victims of crime and the accused. I'm so grateful to everyone who stood up in support of this common sense proposal and to our lawmakers on both sides of the aisle for moving Wisconsin one step closer to making Marsy's Law a reality in our state."

Prior to the votes this week, Marsy's Law for Wisconsin already had more than [200](#)

[key endorsements](#) from legislators, survivors, victims' rights advocates, members of the law enforcement community, legal experts, and others supporting equal rights for crime victims. The legislation now must be approved in a second legislative session before obtaining voter approval through statewide ballot.

**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.

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## **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).