

Marsy's Law for Wisconsin: Bipartisan legislation passes in senate

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Madison, Wisconsin – Legislation to update our state Constitution to ensure equal rights for crime victims passed the State Senate today with broad bipartisan support.

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 the vote:

“My story as a victim of domestic violence is living proof that Wisconsin needs to level the playing field between victims of crime and the accused. I'd like to thank Sen. Wanggaard, Rep. Novak and all of the Senators from both sides of the aisle who voted today to help make equal rights for crime victims a reality in our state. Our lawmakers continue to demonstrate their concern for survivors like me, and I am deeply grateful for their support of this bipartisan legislation that will give victims a stronger voice in the courtroom.”

Prior to the vote, 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 awaits approval by the State Assembly where it is scheduled for a vote on Thursday, November 9.

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.