

Marsy's Law for Wisconsin: Wisconsin district attorneys association endorses Marsy's Law for Wisconsin's bipartisan legislation to ensure equal rights for crime victims

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[Madison, Wis.] – Marsy's Law for Wisconsin announced today that the Board of the Wisconsin District Attorneys Association voted unanimously to support bipartisan legislation to ensure equal rights for crime victims by updating the state Constitution. The group, which represents local district attorneys who prosecute cases and manage victims' services offices across the state, released the following statement:

“District attorneys work with crime victims in communities across Wisconsin every day. We witness the fear, pain and confusion those victims face fighting for justice in our legal system,” said Dodge County District Attorney Kurt F. Klomberg, Legislative Committee Chairman of the Wisconsin District Attorneys Association. “Ensuring that crime victims have rights equal to those of the accused is an important part of protecting our communities, which is why the Wisconsin District Attorneys Association supports Marsy's Law for Wisconsin's bipartisan legislation to do just that.”

Since first [unveiling its legislation April 4](#), Marsy's Law for Wisconsin has been co-sponsored by 40 Republicans and Democrats in the state Legislature, in addition to sponsors State Sen. Van Wanggaard and State Rep. Todd Novak. A hearing on the legislation is [scheduled for Thursday](#).

Domestic abuse survivor Teri Jendusa-Nicolai recently shared her story to show the [need for the legislation](#), and recent polling showed that [nearly 80 percent of Wisconsinites](#) support updating our Constitution to ensure equal rights.

Below are key facts on Marsy's Law for Wisconsin's bipartisan legislation:

- **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 Marsy's Law for Wisconsin is proposing are about making sure victims' rights are truly equal alongside the constitutional rights of the accused - nothing more, nothing less - not introducing new rights as has been done in other states across the country.
- **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. An example of a right that is the law under state statute but needs to be elevated to the Constitution is the right to put victim restitution payments ahead of any dollars owed to the government. An example of a current constitutional right that needs clarification is the right to be heard throughout the legal process, including release, plea, sentencing, disposition, parole, revocation, expungement, or pardon - as opposed to just disposition.
- **Marsy's Law for Wisconsin has the support of a broad and growing coalition of victims' rights groups, law enforcement, attorneys, survivors, and members of local communities across the state.** Marsy's Law for Wisconsin's growing statewide coalition includes victims' rights groups like Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Sojourner Family Peace Center in Milwaukee, and Golden House in Green Bay; Attorney General Brad Schimel and District Attorneys across the state; and law enforcement including the Wisconsin Professional Police

Association, The Wisconsin State Lodge Fraternal Order of Police, The Wisconsin Troopers' Association, the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association, The Badger State Sheriffs' Association, Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association, the Milwaukee Police Association, and dozens of local sheriffs such as Racine County Sheriff Chris Schmaling, and Brown County Sheriff John Gossage.

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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.