

One Wisconsin Now: Column — Brad Schimel Fails Women and Victims

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by Louise Lyall

Brad Schimel has proved time and time again that his first and most important priority is supporting the conservative agenda at the expense of women and of rape survivors.

As a rape survivor and as a woman, I find Brad Schimel's approach offensive and ineffective.

Schimel has been failing victims from the start of his career as an Assistant District Attorney in Waukesha County through his present position as the state's alleged "top cop."

While prosecuting rapists, Brad Schimel repeatedly [defended the rights of the male offender](#) rather than the young female victim. Schimel didn't seek jail time or sex offender registration. He urged the court to consider the futures of the offenders. He blamed victims for the crimes committed against them, saying the rape of a fifteen year old girl was "basically a first date" and that two seventeen year old rape victims used "bad judgement."

Similarly, in his first election, Brad Schimel campaigned on [promises](#) to improve services for rape victims on college campuses and beyond, including allowing Student Health Services to perform rape kit examinations, expanding the SANE program, creating a state-specific hotline and more. Not one of these promises has been fulfilled. Instead, [he refused to fund the testing of rape kits](#) and allowed for important evidence to collect dust on the shelves. [He lied](#) about the backlog, finally contracted to have thousands of kits tested only after negative headlines in an

election year.

Under Schimel, [the DOJ has shuffled around sexual harassers](#), allowing them to keep their jobs. He has supported legislation that allows for the suppression of sexual harassment complaints. He claims the policy is to protect survivors, but in reality, it is to protect the interests of the harassers— the survivors have no choice.

It is not surprising that Schimel fully and completely supported the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh. By supporting Kavanaugh's confirmation, Schimel reaffirmed that he sees more value in supporting conservative policies than in supporting the victims of crimes.

In short, Brad Schimel puts his own partisan political needs ahead of the needs of survivors.

As a rape survivor, the idea of a man like Schimel representing me and my interests was enough to keep me from reporting what happened to me. The politicians responding to Christine Blasey Ford maintained they were exposing the truth, but in reality they re-enforced the toxic narratives survivors tell ourselves. The doubt that we carry— that we can't trust our own experiences or perceptions, that what happened to us was because of a choice we made, that we read the situation wrong or made a mistake— is constantly reaffirmed by politicians like Schimel. This is not who I want defining the "Justice" in the Department of Justice.

For someone who claims to advocate for victims of crimes, Schimel is consistently and willfully ignorant to what we want and need: belief, support, services, evidence and a voice. The conservative agenda and his own reputation are worth more to Schimel than the well-being of the women who he claims support him.

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