

# Rep. Sargent: Wisconsin must do better

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MADISON –Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison) issued the following statement in response to the Association of American Universities Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Assault Climate Survey, showing that 1 in 4 undergraduate women have experienced instances of sexual assault on UW-Madison’s campus:

“Friends and neighbors, and sons and daughters. Future doctors, lawyers, teachers, CEOs, and elected officials. Young adults who attend college to receive a top notch education, meet new people and share endless memories, and who are working towards a better future for themselves and for their peers. These are the young people who continue to be impacted by sexual violence in our nation, our state, our community, and unfortunately, at University of Wisconsin-Madison. **1 in 4.** One out of every four young women who steps foot on campus— my alma matter— endure the traumatic nature of sexual assault, and further endure the lifelong impacts that come with the aftermath of these offenses.

I know firsthand the trauma that sexual violence causes— as a student at UW-Madison I too am a survivor of sexual assault. While we are not defined by what happened to us due to another’s toxic behaviors, we are forever impacted. But my story is not unique. Sexual violence continues to be a rampant and pervasive issue, impacting far too many individuals. I am deeply distressed by the continuation of these extreme levels of sexual misconduct on the campus of one of our state’s most prestigious universities, in addition to the alarming levels that we know are continuing throughout our state and our nation. These numbers are absolutely despicable and unacceptable, and as a state we must act now to tackle this health and safety crisis.

No person should ever have to experience the horror and tragedy of sexual assault,

and as a state it is our responsibility to stand up for survivors of sexual assault and take meaningful steps to prevent these occurrences. Wisconsin must do better.

As a state, we must be doing more to create an inclusive environment that protects sexual assault survivors, and create policies that limit further instances of sexual misconduct. This must begin in our state legislature by enacting policies that ensure justice for survivors of sexual assault. However, the fact of the matter is that the Wisconsin State Assembly is failing to address this crisis, as GOP leadership refuses to bring legislation to the floor that takes meaningful action. Even broadly bipartisan efforts, such as [AB-214](#) that would create and codify procedures for the transmission, processing, and storage of sexual assault kits, has yet to receive even a public hearing. We cannot continue this inaction and complacency any longer. We cannot continue to stand by as thousands of student's lives are forever destructively changed due to sexual violence.

To the students at UW-Madison, and across our state who have been assaulted, I want you to know that you matter, you are resilient, you are a survivor, and you are truly an inspiration to many. You have a community of people on your side, myself included, and we stand with you in solidarity. We see you, we hear you, and we will not stop fighting for you.”