

Sen. Wanggaard: Victims' rights amendment advances in Senate

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Authors Hope to Get Marsy's Law Amendment on April 2019 Ballot

MADISON – A new crime victims' rights amendment for Wisconsin's Constitution cleared an important legislative hurdle today when it passed the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety. If the bill passes the Legislature by next Wednesday, voters will have an opportunity to approve the amendment in the statewide April 2019 election.

"For too long, victims have been treated as second-class citizens in the court room," said Van Wanggaard (R-Racine), the amendment's author. "This proposed amendment would put crime victims' on the same legal footing as a defendant. I'm glad that we can start the session on this bipartisan issue.

Senate Joint Resolution 2 (SJR2) is the second consideration of a proposed constitutional amendment improving and elevating crime victims' rights. Among the rights granted in SJR2, or Marsy's Law, is the right to be treated with dignity, respect, courtesy, sensitivity and fairness. Victims will also have the right to privacy, to be heard in court, and be updated about investigations, and cases. If the amendment does not pass the Legislature next week, crime victims will have to wait until next year to gain these rights.

"It is imperative that the Legislature pass this next week," said Wanggaard. "I urge

all crime victims to let their legislator know the importance of this amendment. They shouldn't have to wait a year to gain these additional rights. They should be prioritized now.”

The Assembly companion resolution, Assembly Joint Resolution 1 is scheduled to be voted out of the Assembly committee tomorrow afternoon. The resolutions are the second consideration of Marsy's Law, which has bipartisan support. Last session, Marsy's Law passed the Legislature last year with 117 of 132 legislators supporting the Resolution. If the Legislature does not pass the amendment next week, the earliest voters could act in February of 2020.