

Marsy's Law: Coalition of hispanic leaders urge support for constitutional amendment

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MADISON – A group of Wisconsin's prominent Hispanic community and business leaders today urged support for the proposed crime victims' constitutional amendment known as Marsy's Law for Wisconsin. The group includes local and state officials as well as leaders of some of the city's most prominent community organizations, all calling for public support for the proposed constitutional amendment as it heads to a statewide vote on April 7.

Julie Valadez, President of the Hispanic Collaborative Network, said: "As a woman and a victim advocate I am familiar with the importance of Marsy's Law. In a time when we have begun to recognize the advances we have made toward addressing the inequality and abuse women have endured, there is still a lot of work to be done and part of this is addressing the systemic issues and our legal system is one of them. Many victims are currently re-victimized by the judicial system and Marsy's Law is needed to ensure that victims have constitutional rights for their wellbeing, safety, and protection. I am grateful for all the work many have done to bring this to a vote in Wisconsin and look forward to seeing it pass and continuing the work of advocating for access to the services and its implementation."

Veronica Esquivel, Waukesha Chapter Leader of VOCES de la Frontera, said: "As a woman, I support other women who suffer from violence and feel there should be more severe protections in place for victims so that the system does not also victimize them which I feel is an injustice. As women, we should be respected, heard, and treated justly."

Veronica Figueroa Velez, Executive Director of UNIDOS, a domestic violence agency in Madison, said: “As someone who works daily with victims of crime, I have seen firsthand how tenuous victims’ rights are in our legal system. We are part of a culture that sends a constant message to victims that their rights and their lives matter less than the accused. This system continues to perpetuate violence over and over again. This is why I support granting additional rights to crime victims to help level this playing field.”

Anselmo Villareal, President of La Casa de Esperanza, Inc. said: “I support Wisconsin’s Marsy’s Law Crime Victims’ Rights Amendment. It is time that victims of crime have the additional rights outlined in Marsy’s Law. We need to ensure that victims of crimes are afforded the same rights as the accused.”

Darryl Morin, Latino Leader, said: “I support Marsy’s Law because victims’ rights should be included when we say ‘and justice for all.’”

Jessica Cavazos, President of the Latino Chamber of Commerce - Madison, said: “As a domestic violence survivor and women’s rights advocate, I believe Mary’s Law will bring justice and relief to victims, while creating safe communities where all its’ members thrive.”

LULAC Council 354 said: “LULAC Council 354 supports Marsy’s Law in Wisconsin which will be beneficial for crime survivors and their families to be protected and have equal rights. We strongly believe that giving a voice to the people is an important aspect of the healing process. This is why we are an active part of seeing these changes in Wisconsin.”

Yolanda Medina, Veteran Advocate, said: “As a Marine Corps Veteran, I lifted my hand to protect, defend and serve all citizens of the United States. It enrages me that in Wisconsin’s courts, victims are not afforded equal rights. Marsy’s Law can change this, empowering survivors and families of victims with the information they need and the notifications they deserve. I support this law in an effort to continue to protect and serve my community.”

The organizations and individuals are part of a diverse, statewide grassroots coalition which has earned nearly 400 key endorsements for the proposed amendment including victims’ advocates, elected officials, law enforcement leaders, and statewide associations. The prominent Hispanic individuals and organizations that have announced their support for the proposed crime victims’ constitutional

amendment include:

- Aldira Algape, Consultant, Gladiolus Business Consulting, LLC
- Anselmo Villareal, President, La Casa de Esperanza, Inc.
- Bernie Gonzales, Activist, SOPHIA
- Darryl Morin, Latino Leader and President, Advanced Wireless
- Hispanic Collaborative Network
- Jessica Cavazos, President, Latino Chamber of Commerce – Madison
- Julie Valadez, President, Hispanic Collaborative Network
- Latino Chamber of Commerce-Madison
- LULAC Council 354
- Marty Calderon, President, GOD TOUCH Milwaukee
- Millie Wenzel, Coordinator of Multicultural Services & Pre-College Program, University of Milwaukee at Waukesha
- UNIDOS
- Veronica Esquivel, Waukesha Chapter Leader, VOCES de la Frontera
- Veronica Figueroa Velez, Executive Director, UNIDOS
- Yolanda Medina, Veteran Advocate

A full list of endorsements is available on the Marsy's Law for Wisconsin [website](#).

Introduced for second consideration as Assembly Joint Resolution 1/Senate Joint Resolution 2 the bipartisan victims' rights legislation was approved in 2019 for placement on the April 2020 ballot after passing the Wisconsin State Senate and Assembly with overwhelming bipartisan support in two consecutive legislative sessions. The upcoming April 7 ratification vote marks the final step in the approval process for the proposed constitutional amendment.