

Marsy's Law: Milwaukee African American leaders urge support for Crime Victims' Constitutional Amendment

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MADISON – A group of prominent African American Milwaukee leaders today urged support for the proposed crime victims' constitutional amendment commonly 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.

NAACP Milwaukee Branch President Fred Royal said: "Ensuring crime victims have a strong voice in the criminal justice process – which they deserve – can be done without diminishing the rights of the accused. The proposed Constitutional Amendment known as Marsy's Law accomplishes just that goal. The NAACP Milwaukee is proud to add our voice to civil rights leaders like Congressman John Lewis and Reverend Jesse Jackson in support of Marsy's Law and we encourage all Wisconsin voters to support the ratification vote on April 7."

Milwaukee Common Council President Ashanti Hamilton said: "Our Justice System can only function when those involved are treated fairly and given equal protections. I'm proud to have endorsed Marsy's Law to guarantee that victims have the rights they deserve."

Social Development Commission (SDC) CEO George P. Hinton said: "Throughout Milwaukee, and particularly in some of the city's lowest income neighborhoods, vulnerable residents remain likely to be impacted by crime. At the

same time, they have minimal access to resources to help them navigate the legal system. Marsy's Law for Wisconsin will have a real impact on the communities that we serve. SDC is proud to endorse this effort to strengthen victims' rights."

State Rep. Jason Fields, who cosponsored the amendment as it moved through the Legislature in 2017 and 2019 said: "Marsy's Law helps us move in the right direction to provide balance and fairness to our judicial system that has often failed victims."

Center for Self Sufficiency President & CEO Carl Wesley said: "In our country, the beauty of the law is that it is created to protect the rights of all citizens. However, as a result of many systemic inequities, particularly in low-income communities of color, the right of the accused has been the focus of community's energy. Unfortunately, this singular focus, many times, has been at the expense of the rights of the victims from the same communities. Marsy's Law introduces duality to the focus!"

City of Milwaukee Office of Violence Prevention Director Reggie Moore said: "It is imperative that victims of crime have access to the rights and protections that they deserve for the sake of healing and justice."

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 Milwaukee area individuals and organizations that have announced their support for the proposed crime victims' constitutional amendment include:

- Becoming Her
- Center for Self Sufficiency
- Children's Hospital of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
- I Will Not Die Young Campaign
- NAACP Milwaukee
- Northcott Neighborhood House
- Social Development Commission (SDC)
- Sojourner Family Peace Center
- Survivor's Journey to Peace
- The Asha Project
- UniteMKE

- Ashanti Hamilton, President, Milwaukee Common Council
- Bria Grant, Executive Director, UniteMKE
- Carl Wesley, Jr., President & CEO, Center for Self Sufficiency
- Ceasar Stinson, Legislative Policy Specialist, Milwaukee Public Schools
- Christopher Conley, Outreach Coordinator, 414LIFE
- Fred Royal Jr, President, NAACP Milwaukee President
- George Hinton, CEO, Social Development Commission (SDC)
- Greg Watson, CEO, GWA Inc
- Joshua Reed, Director, Educational Talent Search, UWM
- LaVerne Badger, Co-Founder, Exposed the Podcast
- MacArthur Weddle, Former Executive Director, Northcott Neighborhood House
- Muhibb Dyer, Co-founder, I Will Not Die Young Campaign
- Natalie Hayden, Co-Founder, Exposed the Podcast
- Reggie Moore, Director, City of Milwaukee Office of Violence Prevention
- Reginold Reed Jr, Founder/CEO, Mindful Companies
- Robert Cherry, Chief Fund Development Officer, Employ Milwaukee
- Sandy Smith, Founder/CEO, Survivor's Journey to Peace
- Shakkiah Curtis, Founder, Becoming Her
- Shawn Muhammad, Co-Executive Director, The Asha Project
- Simmone Kilgore, Survivor Advocate
- Stephanie Findley, CEO, Midwest Construction
- Tony Kearney, Sr., Interim Executive Director, Northcott Neighborhood House

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.