

Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence Calls for Restoration to Rape Victim Funding

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Madison—The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV) called on state officials to prevent decimating proposed cuts to services for rape survivors, citing the connections between sexual assault and domestic violence. Today, the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault and a bipartisan group of nearly half of Wisconsin state legislators proposed solutions that would stabilize the availability of crisis services and support for rape victims in Wisconsin.

“We urge state officials to spare sexual assault services from these drastic cuts and stand with the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault and all sexual assault providers in Wisconsin,” said Patti Seger, executive director of WCADV. “Together, we implore state officials to dedicate discretionary dollars to make up any shortfalls in funding for rape victims and use general purpose revenue in the future.”

The Sexual Assault Victim Services (SAVS) grants, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Justice, are the sole source of state funds for sexual assault victim services. SAVS is critical to Wisconsin sexual assault service providers’ ability to care for victims and their families, including offering 24-hour crisis response, victim advocacy, and criminal justice, legal and medical advocacy.

“While the work of sexual assault advocates is distinct from domestic violence victim advocacy, a great deal of sexual violence occurs within families and intimate partner and dating relationships,” said Seger. “In addition, in most Wisconsin communities, the same agencies that serve domestic violence victims receive state funding to offer separate support services to rape victims. These dramatic cuts mean that there will be substantially less resources to address both types of victimization.”

“While many programs funded by state government have experienced cuts in recent years, the cuts to SAVS are disproportionate,” said Seger. “Victims who have been through this horrendous crime deserve basic services. We know that sexual assault is already substantially underreported. When victims are not supported, they are not able to come forward and sex offenders are not held accountable.”

“Domestic violence and sexual assault are far too prevalent in our society. Most people have been—or have a close friend or family member who has been—directly affected. Therefore, most people understand in very real terms the necessity of having somewhere to turn when the unimaginable happens. It is vitally important that state officials address the SAVS deficit,” concluded Seger.

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See previous releases from the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault:

Dec 2: [Wisconsin to Slash Funding of Direct Sexual Assault Services by Over 40 Percent in 2012](#)

Dec. 9: [Time for action, recommended solutions to sexual assault victim services funding crisis](#)

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