PRESS RELEASE

Several WCASA Legislative Priorities Become Law During Tumultuous 2011-2012 Session

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Madison – The 2011-2012 legislative session came to a close on March 16th, with important sexual assault-related bills passed since the session began – several of which were part of the legislative agenda for the session of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

“What this clearly shows is that we can all come together to advance sound policies aimed at ending sexual violence in Wisconsin,” stated Pennie Myers, acting Executive Director of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

A list of the sexual assault-related bills passed during the 2011-2012 legislative session will be available on the Policy and Law page at www.wcasa.org once final action has been taken by the Governor. Among the legislative highlights from the session were the following:

**Removing the Statute of Limitations on Sexual Assault of an Adult (Assembly Bill 552)**

Under this bill, first-degree sexual assault of an adult is added to the exceptions to the 6-year felony statute of limitations, allowing prosecutions of this offense to be brought at any time. First-degree sexual assault of a child was already exempted from this arbitrary limitation.

http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2011/related/enrolled/ab552

**Crime Victims Rights (Assembly Bill 232)**

This bill represents an important step forward in victims’ rights, conferring upon victims the right to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect for privacy by public officials, employees, or agencies. The bill also gives victims the ability to seek relief on their own when these rights have been violated.

https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2011/proposals/ab232

**Reporting Signs of Abuse and Neglect (Act 81 (2011 Senate Bill 42))**

This new law appropriately expands the list of those in our schools who are required to report when they observe signs of abuse or neglect of students to include all school employees.

https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2011/proposals/sb42

**District Attorney Pay Progression (Senate Bill 394)**

High attorney turnover in county district attorneys’ offices has had a significant impact on the ability to prosecute sensitive crimes such as sexual assaults in recent years. This bill sets up a mechanism for pay progression for these attorneys and should help retain highly skilled assistant district attorneys experienced in the prosecution of these crimes.

http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2011/proposals/sb394

Moving forward, WCASA will continue to work with all interested parties on the three key elements of what must be a robust state response to the prevalence of sexual violence in Wisconsin: (1) prevention, (2) the provision of services to victims and their families when assaults do occur, and (3) the successful prosecution and management of offenders.

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