ACTION ALERT: CALL COMMITTEE CHAIRS TODAY TO SUPPORT VICTIM ACCOMPANIMENT LEGISLATION!

SB354/AB 204, the Victim Accompaniment law, had a public hearing in the Senate Committee on Transportation, Public Safety, and Veterans and Military Affairs yesterday. Your calls are needed to ensure this legislation continues to move forward. Please make the following calls today to show your support for this important legislation.

1. Contact Senator Petrowsky and urge him to bring SB 354 up for a committee vote.

2. Contact Representative Ott and urge him to hold a public hearing on AB 204.

SB 354/AB 204 does the following

- Victim Accompaniment legislation provides victims of sexual assault and human trafficking the right to be accompanied by a victim advocate at certain key events in the medical and criminal justice systems (i.e. SANE exams, law enforcement interviews etc.).
The presence of an advocate can minimize trauma during legal and medical proceedings after an assault. Advocates not only provide emotional support but can also explain procedures and provide basic information about the legal and medical systems. An advocate is the only person whose sole concern is the victim’s well-being and who has no other obligation to any other agency or individual.

Existing Crime Victim Rights laws ensure that all crime victims are treated with “fairness, dignity and respect for their privacy.” The presence of a victim advocate helps make good on that promise.

Support from an advocate can also help ensure that victims feel empowered to continue through the difficult criminal justice process – resulting in more frequent reporting and prosecution of crimes. Our communities are safer when victims feel supported when reporting sensitive crimes and participating in their prosecution.

“Victim Accompaniment” laws already exist in eleven other states and have proven effective.

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