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WCASA, Community Partners React With Horror and Admiration to Cates Case

Madison, WI January 20, 2011 – “It doesn’t matter how long you’ve worked in the field of sexual assault victim advocacy; every once in a while a case comes along that really tests your resolve because the facts are just so painful” stated Jeanie Kurka Reimer, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA), responding to a report about a Milwaukee case involving a police officer being investigated for sexual assault.

WCASA is a statewide coalition incorporated in 1985 to support and complement the work of Wisconsin’s community-based sexual assault service providers (SASP's) and other organizations working to end sexual violence.

“This case is outrageous. It epitomizes the violation of trust at the center of the majority of sexual assaults – where the perpetrator is known by the victim,” explained Ms. Kurka Reimer. “The fact that the assailant was an officer of the law responding to a 911 call makes his actions that much more reprehensible.”

“In contrast, the survivor has displayed tremendous courage – as all survivors do. She, and the reporter covering her case, have bravely put forth the details of her experience, including the tremendous social and mental health consequences she is struggling with; something many victims encounter. In a culture where women are devalued, and victims of sexual violence–male and female–are doubted or ignored, speaking up is an act of bravery.”

When asked if this case would impact the sense of trust of police officers in general, Ms. Kurka Reimer responded “The privilege of wearing a badge comes with great responsibility. This is not about all police officers being bad, nor about all men being bad. It is an indictment of a culture that believes taking advantage of people in vulnerable positions could be appropriate, acceptable behavior.”