Talking Points for Writing and Calling Your Lawmakers
Help Us Prevent Rape: Increase Funding for Sexual Assault Services and Prevention

Spring 2015

One of the most powerful things you can do is to include your own story or experience, that of someone close to you (provided they gave you permission to share that story), and/or other real-life examples of why we must better address sexual violence. Please also personalize the following talking points where possible. Thank you for your citizen advocacy!

• I am a constituent. My name is_________ , and my address and phone number are (so they can respond and/or confirm you are a constituent) _______.
• I contact you today as a private citizen greatly concerned that the governor’s proposed budget does not increase funding for the Sexual Assault Victim Services grant program (called SAVS) above its current level of roughly $2 million annually.
• SAVS is the only state funding for sexual assault services, community education, and prevention.
  o Examples of services funded by SAVS include: 24/7 crisis hotlines, personal support, guidance in the medical and criminal justice processes, and prevention and community education initiatives
  (Insert your story, that of someone close to you, real-life examples, etc. here…)
• Please ask the Joint Finance Committee to increase funding for the Sexual Assault Victim Services grant program to $4 million annually, funded via general purpose revenue as is currently the case.
• Sexual assault services are stretched so thin that many survivors encounter weeks- to months-long waiting lists, and some must travel through multiple counties to access the closest service provider.
• The governor’s proposed flat funding of SAVS is not a victory when we are already serving only a tiny fraction of survivors of sexual assault.
  o The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that in Wisconsin:
    ▪ 390,000 women have experienced rape
    ▪ 912,000 women have experienced sexual violence other than rape
    ▪ and 507,000 men have experienced sexual violence other than rape
  o According to the Wisconsin Department of Justice, in 2013, Wisconsin’s sexual assault service providers had only enough funds to serve 12,703 survivors.
  o Current funding is so low that SAVS grantees do not serve six counties at all (Barron, Buffalo, Florence, Green Lake, Sawyer and Waushara).
• With increased funding, providers can help more survivors, do more prevention, and ultimately save the state money.
  o The cost of sexual assault is staggering. Studies have found that the cost of each sexual assault ranges between $87,000 and $240,776.
    ▪ This accounts for medical and victim services, loss of productivity, decreased quality of life, and law enforcement resources.
• The human costs of sexual assault are also staggering. As a result of sexual assault, survivors are:
  • 3 times more likely to suffer from depression
  • 6 times more likely to suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder
  • 4 times more likely to contemplate suicide
  • 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol
  • and 26 times more likely to abuse drugs
  (For a letter or email) Please respond with what action you took to raise this issue with the Joint Finance Committee.
  (For a call) What will you do to raise this issue with the Joint Finance Committee?
• Thank you.