



## Policy Update: State Budget News & Federal Action Alert

July 17, 2015

### State Budget News

The governor signed the 2015-2017 state budget into law earlier this week, using his broad veto powers to make over 100 changes to the final budget bill. Our budget priorities, however, survived, as listed below. Please know: YOU HAVE MADE A HUGE DIFFERENCE in building political will in the Capitol for survivors, services and prevention. This will serve us well moving forward.

- Your activism helped WCASA spark moving statements of support from key legislators in the powerful Joint Finance Committee ([more info here](#)) and a funding increase for the **Sexual Assault Victim Services grant program (SAVS)**. Bucking this budget's trend of cuts, SAVS received a \$100,000 increase for 2016-2017 (i.e., the second year of the state's two-year budget) to a total of over \$2.1 million annually. That is the most annual funding yet for this program.

WCASA advocated for much more funding than this. However, this increase and the outpouring of legislators' support are steps in the right direction. *We expect to advocate for doubling SAVS' funding again next time, given how incredibly close we came to that goal with your advocacy this budget season ([details here](#)).*

- The proposal to provide the **University of Wisconsin System autonomy** from the state was successfully stripped from the budget. WCASA opposed this proposal ([press release](#)). The proposal would have meant, among other things, the UW System would be free from current requirements to provide a report to the state on campus sexual assault and to provide various sexual assault education and programming on campus.
- The budget creates a \$2 million program in the Department of Children and Families to provide **services to child victims of sex trafficking**, beginning in 2016-2017. The department is drawing up plans for the program, and WCASA is offering input. WCASA supported this provision.
- The budget provides \$1 million total over the next two years for **legal aid services** to certain low-income families (those eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (a.k.a. welfare)) for cases related to sexual abuse, domestic abuse, restraining orders and injunctions for at-risk individuals. We expect to have more details about this in the near future. WCASA supported this provision.

### Federal Appropriations Alert from NDD United

"... the current budget framework under which the House and Senate are writing their appropriations bills abides by the sequestered Budget Control Act (BCA) caps. The inadequacy of these levels has been proven time and time again through appropriations bills that fail to make the necessary nondefense discretionary (NDD) investments that protect all Americans and promote a strong economy.

"If these cuts are to be avoided, Congress must work with the President to replace sequestration with a balanced approach to deficit reduction. Such sequestration relief should maintain the parity principle set in the "Ryan-Murray" Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) and reverse sequestration for both defense and nondefense.

**“To amplify this message, we encourage all national, state, and local organizations to [sign on](#) to this letter urging Congress to build on the Bipartisan Budget Act and stop sequestration. ...** The letter is also available online [here](#). Due to the large number of signatures, we WILL NOT be accepting any edits. Organizations must sign on to the letter ‘as is.’

“If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact NDD United Co-Chairs Emily Holubowich at [eholubowich @ dc-crd.com](mailto:eholubowich@dc-crd.com) or Joel Packer at [jpacker @ rabengroup.com](mailto:jpacker@rabengroup.com). We look forward to your continued support for NDD United and our campaign to end sequestration, once and for all.”

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Thank you for your citizen advocacy on behalf of survivors of sexual assault and their families across Wisconsin!  
Your engagement makes all the difference!

Sincerely,

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