



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

December 8, 2011

The Honorable J.B. Van Hollen
Attorney General
Wisconsin Department of Justice
114 East, State Capitol

Dear Attorney General Van Hollen,

As members of the Wisconsin State Legislature, we are extremely concerned with the troubling situation facing Sexual Assault Victim Services (SAVS) grants and the impact it will have on programs for victims of these crimes across the state. **In turn, we formally request that your department hold SAVS grant funding harmless from any further cuts.**

As you are aware, the Department of Justice has notified many local sexual assault service providers that their SAVS grant will likely be cut by over forty percent in 2012. Between cuts in the state budget and declining revenue from the Crime Victim and Witness Assistance Surcharge, your decision to cut SAVS grants an additional 5.2 percent under Act 32 has the potential to significantly diminish the ability for our communities to provide critical services to sexual assault victims.

It is important to note that a number of state agencies have found ways to exempt critical services from cuts under Act 32, and the Department of Administration specifically noted in its guidance on Act 32 that high priority items should be spared from further cuts. We strongly believe that direct services to victims of sexual assault should be exempt from further cuts, as additional cuts to this program will have a dramatic impact on victims of sexual assault and their loved ones.

SAVS is the lone state funding source of direct sexual assault victim services in Wisconsin. There are 46 local service providers across Wisconsin that depend on this grant and, like many other vital state programs, they have been struggling to do more with less for years. **Simply put, the additional cuts you have levied under Act 32 have the potential to decimate the ability for agencies to provide important services to sexual assault victims next year.**

It is our hope that we may work with you in the future to secure an additional investment for SAVS, in order to ensure the strength and solvency of this vital program for years to come. However, especially in light of current events and recent comments you have made supporting victims of sexual assault, we strongly urge you to immediately reconsider additional cuts to important services for victims of these horrendous crimes.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Sandy Pasch
State Representative
22nd Assembly District

Brett Hulsey
State Representative
77th Assembly District

Tamara Grigsby
State Representative
18th Assembly District

Jennifer Shilling
State Senator
32nd Senate District

Donna Seidel
State Representative
85th Assembly District

Nick Milroy
State Representative
73rd Assembly District

Jon Erpenbach
State Senator
27th Senate District

Chris Taylor
State Representative
48th Assembly District

Jim Holperin
State Senator
12th Senate District

Janet Bewley
State Representative
74th Assembly District

Chris Sinicki
State Representative
20th Assembly District

Robert Turner
State Representative
61st Assembly District

Lena C. Taylor
State Senator
4th Senate District

Terese Berceau
State Representative
76th Assembly District

Peter Barca
State Representative
64th Assembly District

Chris Larson
State Senator
7th Senate District

Cory Mason
State Representative
62nd Assembly District

Mark Pocan
State Representative
78th Assembly District

Bob Jauch
State Senator
25th Senate District

Dave Hansen
State Senator
30th Senate District

Tony Staskunas
State Representative
15th Assembly District

Robert Wirch
State Senator
22nd Senate District

John Steinbrink
State Representative
65th Assembly District

Penny Bernard Schaber
State Representative
57th Assembly District

Kathleen Vinehout
State Senator
31st Senate District

Andy Jorgensen
State Representative
37th Assembly District

Jon Richards
State Representative
19th Assembly District

Julie Lassa
State Senator
24th Senate District

Fred Risser
State Senator
26th Senate District

Louis Molepske, Jr.
State Representative
71st Assembly District

Josh Zepnick
State Representative
9th Assembly District

Kelda Roys
State Representative
81st Assembly District