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## 2017 - 2018 Public Policy Agenda January 2017



### OVERVIEW

The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Inc. (WCASA) is a membership agency comprised of 54 sexual assault service providers (SASPs) across the state working to end sexual violence in Wisconsin.

Informed by the membership-based Public Policy Advisory Committee, WCASA developed this Public Policy Agenda consistent with our mission, philosophy, and agenda-setting criteria. However, this is a living document. We encourage legislators, sexual assault survivors, SASPs, and others to contact us with other public policy ideas throughout the 2017-2018 legislative session in Wisconsin.

#### Mission

To create the social change necessary to end sexual violence.

#### Philosophy

Our mission is based on the following philosophy:

- We believe it is a basic human right to live free of sexual violence.
- We believe that everyone has a role and a responsibility in this work.
- We do not do this work in isolation. We believe in the importance of collaborations and alliance building.
- Our work is driven by survivors' voices. Survivors and all those affected by sexual violence deserve compassionate services, dignity, privacy, and respect.
- We believe that this work is based in a feminist perspective that sexual violence is rooted in oppressive power relations.
- We believe that sexual violence is any unwanted sexual contact (verbal and/or physical), including rape, incest, child sexual assault, ritual abuse, acquaintance rape/assault, intimate partner or marital rape, sexual harassment, exposure, and voyeurism. Sexual violence refers to acts of violence where sex is used as the weapon.
- We believe that diversity and safe, accessible services are fundamental to social change.
- We believe in the power of advocacy, education, prevention, and driving public policy as agents of social change.

## **Position-Setting Criteria**

WCASA prioritized the following policy positions according to these criteria, listed in no particular order:

- Available WCASA resources
- Impact on survivors of sexual violence
- Alignment with WCASA's long-term interests
- Substantial agreement among members, as represented by the membership-based Public Policy Advisory Committee
- Lack of adequate coverage by allied organizations
- Ability to achieve a meaningful policy outcome
- Timeliness



## **AGENDA**

### **Tier 1, Leadership Issues**

Based on the criteria above, WCASA considers Tier 1 issues the organization's highest public policy priorities.

- **Campus Sexual Assault**
  - WCASA supports partnerships between college/university campuses and their local SASPs for providing truly confidential, community-based sexual assault victim services and collaborating on effective prevention.
- **Sexual Assault Kits**
  - WCASA supports providing sexual assault survivors increased access to information regarding their sexual assault kits.
- **Sexual Assault Services and Prevention Funding**
  - WCASA supports increasing funding for sexual assault victim services and prevention.
- **Sexual Violence Prevention**
  - WCASA supports providing effective sexual violence prevention in and outside of schools.
- **Public Reporting**
  - WCASA supports the creation of a publicly available, regularly updated, online reporting system of data concerning sexual violence in Wisconsin.

## **Tier 2, Participant Issues**

Tier 2 issues are important to WCASA but are well covered by other allied organizations. WCASA will be as supportive as possible on these priorities, and will engage our membership selectively and strategically, where members' contributions can produce a meaningful policy outcome.

- **Racial Justice**

- WCASA supports focusing services and prevention for women of color who experience disproportionately high rates of sexual violence.
- WCASA supports protecting the rights, freedoms and well-being of people of color.
- WCASA supports dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline and related reforms to systems that disproportionately impact people of color.

- **LGBTQ+**

- WCASA supports focusing services and prevention for members of LGBTQ+ communities, who experience disproportionately high rates of sexual violence.
- WCASA supports protecting the rights, freedoms and well-being of members of LGBTQ+ communities.

- **Economic Justice**

- WCASA supports addressing systemic, economic inequities that disproportionately impact historically marginalized communities.

- **Sex Trafficking**

- WCASA supports addressing sex trafficking through effective prevention and intervention that treats affected individuals as victims or survivors rather than as delinquents or criminals.
- WCASA supports placing greater focus on addressing demand for sex trafficking, including harsher penalties on “buyers” and pimps/traffickers.
- WCASA supports providing trafficking survivors comprehensive, effective services and protections.

- **Statute of Limitations for Child Victims (civil suit)**

- WCASA supports expanding or abolishing time limits (i.e., statutes of limitations) within which a victim of sexual assault as a child can bring a civil suit against the perpetrator.

- **Reproductive Health**

- WCASA supports protecting or advancing women's reproductive health, including access to comprehensive reproductive health services.

### **Tier 3, Monitored Issues**

Tier 3 issues are important to WCASA. These issues can become higher priorities when events warrant. WCASA will monitor these issues and possibly issue statements, sign joint letters initiated by allies, and other actions.

- **SANE Shortage**
  - WCASA supports expanding the availability of medical forensic examiners and exams throughout Wisconsin.
- **Access to Confidential Survivor Information**
  - WCASA supports clarifying the threshold that defense attorneys must meet to obtain survivors' confidential records.
- **Housing**
  - WCASA supports increased flexibility for sexual assault survivors to terminate their rental agreement. Lessening the proof requirements in housing law, such that sexual assault survivors can terminate a rental agreement more easily if a sexual assault advocate informs the landlord that the tenant is a survivor of sexual assault.



If you have any questions or would like to discuss other public policy matters related to sexual assault, please contact:

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