



Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center

SB101 Testimony Senate Judiciary Committee February 16, 2017

Dear Chairperson and Committee Members,

The Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center (WASAC) has provided services to survivors of sexual assault since 1974. Last year, WASAC advocates worked with 2,235 victims of sexual assault, their friends and families. Services provided to survivors and their families includes a 24 hour hotline, medical and court advocacy, assistance with protection orders, support groups, and short-term therapy, to name a few. Advocates work with survivors to develop a safety plan which may include many strategies including a protection order if possible.

Unfortunately, many survivors of sexual assault are not eligible for a protection order because the victimization they have experienced does not qualify for an order. As you know, to qualify for a Protection From Abuse order, there is a relationship requirement of "intimate partners or household members". While intimate partners and household members are the abuser in some situations, in other situations the abuser is a friend, coworker, friend of the family or a neighbor.

A Protection from Stalking order currently requires a course of conduct which means two or more separate acts over a period of time. In the case of rape and other forms of sexual assault, the victim/survivor has already experienced an extremely traumatic event. Victims have been told in Sedgwick County that they do not qualify for an order of protection unless there have been two incidents. This is tantamount to saying to a victim, 'just wait until it happens again.' I believe we can do better than that!

Victims of sexual assault often report that the abuser said he would come back, hurt her again, hurt someone she cares about, or similar threats. She may be afraid to leave her house, go to work, or take her children to school because of the violence committed and threats made.

The changes proposed by SB101 could be crucial to survivors when criminal charges are not filed. When charges are not filed, there is nothing that prohibits the abuser from contacting

the victim again and again. This is an opportunity for survivors to have an order made by the court stating the abuser must stay away from the victim after one traumatic victimization.

I want to thank the committee for working on this legislation in support of survivors of sexual assault across the state of Kansas. Survivors deserve the support of all of us, in each of our capacities. Please consider making this protection order a reality to support victims and hold abusers accountable. Thank you.

Suggested changes for your consideration. I am aware Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) submitted testimony with recommendations for amendments. I urge you to consider adopting the changes recommended by KCSDV.

Submitted by,



Kathy Williams
Executive Director