VICTIMS 04/05/16 N. HOWELL

A new law in Wisconsin will make it easier for young victims of sexual assault to report the crime to law enforcement.

MP3 RUNS: 1:30 O/C: STD

NATALIE HOWELL: A NEW BILL HAS BEEN PASSED IN WISCONSIN THAT WILL MAKE IT EASIER FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT TO REPORT TO LAW ENFORCEMENT. THE SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIM AMNESTY BILL, OR ASSEMBLY BILL 808, PROHIBITS LAW ENFORCEMENT FROM ISSUING AN UNDERAGE DRINKING TICKET TO A VICTIM OR BYSTANDER WHEN REPORTING A SEXUAL ASSAULT. IT ALSO PROHIBITS THE UW SYSTEM FROM TAKING ANY DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST STUDENTS WHEN REPORTING. WORKING WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT AND THE UW-MADISON STUDENT ORGANIZATION PAVE, WHICH FOCUSES ON SUPPORT FOR ASSAULT VICTIMS, REPRESENTATIVE JOAN BALLWEG, WHO AUTHORED THE BILL, SAID THAT IT WAS PASSED THROUGH THE SUPPORT OF BOTH DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS.

JOAN BALLWEG: “BECAUSE I THINK WE WORKED WITH ALL THE INTERESTED PARTIES, EVERYBODY IN THE END WAS SUPPORTIVE OF THE PROPOSAL. IT DIDN’T MATTER WHAT SIDE OF THE AISLE YOU WERE ON.”

NATALIE HOWELL: BROOKE MARLOW, CLIENT SUPPORT ADVOCATE FOR THE ST. CROIX VALLEY SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM, OR SART, SAID THAT IT IS NOT COMMON FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT TO CHARGE VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT FOR LESSER CRIMES, SUCH AS UNDERAGE DRINKING. BEFORE THE PASSING OF THE SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIM AMNESTY BILL HOWEVER, MEMBERS OF SART COULD NEVER PROMISE VICTIMS THAT THEY WOULDN’T BE CHARGED IF THEY CHOSE TO REPORT.

BROOKE MARLOW: “IT’S KIND OF ALWAYS BEEN AN UNSPOKEN RULE THAT YOU SHOULD ADDRESS THE BIGGEST CONCERN, NOT THE FACT THAT THEY HAD A DRINK. BUT BECAUSE IT WAS NEVER MANDATED, IT’S NEVER BEEN SET IN STONE, THERE WAS ALWAYS THAT POSSIBILITY.”

NATALIE HOWELL: BALLWEG SAID THAT SHE DOESN’T EXPECT THIS CHANGE OF LAW TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF SEXUAL ASSAULT. HOWEVER, SHE SAID, IT WILL ALLOW FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ALL AROUND WISCONSIN THAT HAVE BEEN THROUGH A TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE TO BE ABLE TO REPORT TO LAW ENFORCEMENT WITHOUT FEAR. FOR THE FALCON NEWS SERVICE, I’M NATALIE HOWELL.”

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