

February 20, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mary Ellen Stone, Executive Director KCSARC

mstone@kcsarc.org, 425.282.0354

Bi-Partisan Bill to Create Equal Protection for Sexual Assault Victims Passes House Vote House of Representatives Votes 76-21 on Sexual Assault Protection Order (SAPO) Bill

OLYMPIA, Washington – A bill to create equal protection for victims of sexual assault in Washington, passed the House of Representatives today by a wide margin, 76 - 21. House Bill 1384, sponsored by Rep. Roger Goodman (D-45th), would bring sexual assault protection orders (SAPO) in line with other protection orders that are issued for victims of domestic violence, stalking and harassment, allowing them to be granted for a length of time longer than two years, which is the current law.

The SAPO modifications and proposed bills supporting them, have broad bi-partisan support in both the House and the State Senate. The companion bill, Senate Bill 5256, is currently under review by the Senate Rules Committee.

“This is a huge step in the right direction to get this legislation passed to help protect victims of sexual assault in Washington state,” said Mary Ellen Stone, Executive Director for King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KCSARC). “We are grateful to those in the House of Representatives who voted to support this bill, and are hopeful that the companion bill will continue to move forward on the Senate side.”

A SAPO is a civil order issued by the court that requires the perpetrator to stay away from the victim and locations they frequent, and to have no further direct or indirect contact with the victim. HB 1384 and its companion in the Senate, SB 5256, propose modifications to the duration and burden of proof on reissuance elements of the statute. The modifications would bring SAPOs in line with other Washington protection orders that are granted to victims of domestic violence, stalking, or harassment.

As the current language stands, if a victim still needs protection after two years, she must go back to court to reapply for the order and appear in court to present her case again to get the order re-issued. The SAPO process is difficult — in King County Superior Court, fewer than half of the SAPO petitions filed over the past five years resulted in the entry of a protection order.

The bill has passed in both the House and State Senate at different times in the past two years. Other sponsors include Reps. Sherry Appleton (D-23rd), Beth Doglio (D-22nd), Dan Griffey (R-35th), Laurie Jinkins (D-27th), Ruth Kagi (D-32nd), Christine Kilduff (D-28th), Kristine Lytton (D-40th), Timm Ormsby (D-3rd), Tana Senn, (D-41st), Melanie Stambaugh (R-25th), Derek Stanford (D-1st) and Gael Tarleton (D-36th). In the State Senate, sponsors include Sens. Maralyn Chase (D-32nd) Jeannie Darneille (D-27th), David Frockt (D-46th), Sam Hunt (D-22nd), Patty Kuderer (D-48th), Mark Miloscia (R-30th), Gary Palumbo (D-1st), Jamie Pedersen (D-43rd) and Hans Zeiger (R-25th).

[King County Sexual Assault Resource Center \(KCSARC\)](#) founded in 1976, is a non-profit organization that ensures all people affected by sexual violence and abuse get the treatment they need and the advocacy they deserve. KCSARC is at the forefront of change, guiding public policy development and delivering research-based education to create safer environments for everyone.