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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 First Hurdle House Judiciary Committee Passes Sexual Assault Protection Order (SAPO) Bill

OLYMPIA, Washington – A bill to create equal protection for victims of sexual assault in Washington, sailed through the House Judiciary Committee by a 12-1 vote on Thursday. House Bill 1384, sponsored by Rep. Roger Goodman, (D-45th) with broad bi-partisan support, now goes to the House Rules Committee.

In committee, a bipartisan agreement was reached on language with protects victims, while clarifying that the bill does not undermine existing firearms rights.

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.

“We are pleased with the results of this first vote on HB 1384,” said Mary Ellen Stone, Executive Director for King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KCSARC). “Now it’s our hope that with the many lawmakers who support this version of the bill, it will be passed out of the Rules Committee and onto the House floor for a full vote.”

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. And when a SAPO is effective in keeping the respondent away from the petitioner, it is not unusual for this to be an argument against reissuance, rather than acknowledging the effectiveness of the SAPO.

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.