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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mary Ellen Stone, Executive Director KCSARC

mstone@kcsarc.org, 425.282.0354

Governor Inslee to Sign Bill to Increase Protections for Sexual Assault Victims

Signing of Senate Bill 5256 Set for Friday in Federal Way

OLYMPIA, Washington - Governor Jay Inslee is set to sign Senate Bill 5256 this week, which creates equal protection for victims of sexual assault in the state of Washington. The signing will take place at 2:30pm on Friday, May 5th at the City of Federal Way Council Chambers, 33325 8th Ave. South in Federal Way. Supporters of the bill will be in attendance.

The new law will allow courts to grant protection orders for a fixed period, even permanently, instead of what's been a current maximum of two years. It also reduces burdens to renew existing orders. These changes will make SAPOs consistent with protections available to domestic violence, stalking, and harassment victims.

"This is an exciting moment for everyone who has supported this legislation to help expand protection for victims of sexual assault," said Mary Ellen Stone, Executive Director of KCSARC. "We appreciate the efforts of Senator Fain and Representative Goodman, and other lawmakers who helped shepherd this bill into law, so that victims are no longer traumatized by the SAPO process."

During the 2017 legislative session, SB 5256 and its companion bill in the House, HB 1382, received widespread support from lawmakers.

"More than 13,000 women and men accessed critically important resources available to victims of sexual assault in Washington last year, with many more instances going unreported," said Sen. Joe Fain, of Auburn, who sponsored the legislation. "This law will help strengthen protections for many of them and encourage countless others to come out of the shadows to receive the support and protection they need and deserve."

"We must do all we can to spare victims and survivors of sexual assault the further trauma of having to face their assailants repeatedly," said Rep. Roger Goodman, (D-45th), who sponsored the companion bill in the House. "I'm so pleased we were finally able to pass this important law to give needed protection to victims."

Once a SAPO is in place, it requires the respondent to stay away from the victim and place(s) that the victim frequents (home, work, school, etc.), and to have no further direct or indirect contact with the victim. Violation of a protection order can result in criminal charges against the attacker.

In 2016, Washington state programs served 15,641 people impacted by sexual violence, with about 5,000 of those victims in King County.

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[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.