



April 7, 2020

The Honorable (First Name, Last Name), (County Name) County Sheriff
(County Name) County Sheriff's Office
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Sheriff (Last Name):

As North Dakota and other states across the nation struggle with the devastating effects of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, law enforcement has played an important role in battling the pandemic in our communities. We would like to thank you and your office for all you do to protect us. We truly appreciate what you and your staff have sacrificed to ensure the safety of our citizens, particularly during this global health crisis.

Our state is in uncharted territory with this pandemic, and we understand many difficult decisions are being carefully evaluated to protect people. Many jurisdictions are considering or have decided to take extraordinary measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including the release of some inmates. Should this happen, we implore you to protect the constitutional rights of victims by making every effort to provide them with notice and, where possible, to allow victims to provide input during deliberations. Like many during this difficult time, victims are facing extraordinary stress from self-isolation and quarantine, which could make them particularly susceptible to trauma from encountering a perpetrator they believe is incarcerated.

Marsy's Law for North Dakota also wants to let you know that we can be a resource for you and your office as you protect victims' constitutional rights and consider their concerns throughout the criminal justice process. Four years ago, we partnered with law enforcement throughout the state to support the passage of Marsy's Law with more than 60% of the vote, ensuring crime victims have meaningful and enforceable constitutional rights equal to the rights of the accused. The Marsy's Law campaign in 2016 would not have been successful without law enforcement's commitment and support.

The same belief that compelled Marsy's Law into action in 2016 remains today – elevating victims' rights to the state constitution ensures that their concerns are at the forefront of North Dakota's judicial process. Thirteen states across the country have passed Marsy's Law as the seminal victims' rights movement in this country, and we have learned much along the way that can help us be a resource to you and your staff as you implement Marsy's Law.

We know that we can learn a lot from your experiences, about how Marsy's Law has impacted North Dakota communities, and how we can be a resource for you in the future. We are interested in hearing about the progress that has been made around the state and how we can be of service to the law enforcement community on these issues.

We appreciate your continued support of victims' constitutional rights, and we look forward to continuing to be a partner in ensuring a fair and just criminal justice system, both in this challenging time of the COVID-19 crisis and in the future.

Best regards,

Nicholas W. Klitzing
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