



## Press Release

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Livingston County has witnessed exactly how our criminal justice system has failed brave young women who have survived sexual assault. Following an offender's plea of guilty to 6 counts of criminal sexual conduct, survivors are now faced with the possibility of having to attend school with their attacker. Representative Lana Theis proposed bills intended to protect student-survivors of criminal sexual assault; however, they do not go far enough to actually protect them... Now Lana Theis is running for State Senate, but our State needs more than what she is offering.

House Bill 5530 shows a fundamental lack of understanding of our criminal justice system. Lana Theis proposes that instead of the current discretion given to judges we should mandate that judges order an offender to not attend the same school *building* as the survivor. It sounds like a good fix, but it does not contemplate that any court would soon lose jurisdiction over the offender. A court order is only good for as long as the offender is supervised by the court. We must also keep in mind that half of these offenders are not even eligible for court supervision, so this bill would be a half-solution at best.

Instead, the fix should be to make it a crime for an individual convicted—or adjudicated as a juvenile to have committed the offense—of criminal sexual conduct to enter any school or residence attended by a survivor of his acts. Then, whether the offender is supervised by the court or by the Michigan Department of Corrections, the survivor would not have to be concerned with sharing a classroom with the offender. There would be no need to renew a Personal Protection Order or fear a court losing jurisdiction.

Combined, the bills Lana Theis proposed read as half-measures with an unfamiliarity with our criminal justice system disguised as an effort to protect these survivors. My fear is that the introduction of these bills was merely a political move in the hopes of getting easy "wins" in Lansing before an important election. These survivors deserve better. We deserve better.