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## AG MADIGAN'S MEASURE TO IMPROVE RESPONSES TO CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT BECOMES LAW

**Chicago** — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that her measure to help colleges and universities prevent and address sexual assaults is now law in Illinois. House Bill 821, sponsored by Rep. Michelle Mussman (D-Schaumburg) and Sen. Toi Hutchinson (D-Olympia Fields), passed through the General Assembly unanimously and was signed into law today.

This spring Madigan convened summits around the state to discuss the Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act, which sets standards to prevent and respond to sexual violence at higher education institutions throughout Illinois.

"Under this new law, schools will be required to better prevent and respond to sexual violence," said Madigan. "Schools play a vital role in a survivor's recovery by providing support and resources that will enable a student to heal and continue his or her education."

"As students return to colleges and universities around the state, I am proud that we are taking important steps to ensure they are safe on the campuses where they will spend countless hours studying and living," Mussman said. "Helping survivors of rape begin the process of recovery more quickly and increasing the resources available to them are important steps, and I look forward to working with the Attorney General in the future to continue making our state a safer place."

"Sexual violence on college campuses has to stop, and bringing the issue into the open is an important step toward ending that culture," Hutchinson said. "I was proud to work with the Attorney General and my colleagues in the General Assembly to make sure student survivors have the support they need to report the crime and begin to heal."

Julia Dixon, a survivor of campus sexual assault while at the University of Akron and an ambassador for Promoting Awareness, Victim Empowerment (PAVE), joined the Attorney General at summits this spring to advocate for changing school policies regarding rape and sexual assault.

"Being sexually assaulted as a student can easily derail the rest of your collegiate career, but it does not have to," Dixon said. "Having established campus protocols can be the difference between a survivor dropping out or receiving a diploma. Whether it is by helping survivors report their attacks to law enforcement, access counseling or even adjust their schedules to help avoid encounters with their attackers, schools can help survivors begin their recoveries without sacrificing their educations."

Studies show that one in five undergraduate women will become a victim of rape or attempted rape. In fact, the U.S. Department of Education has said women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rates of sexual assault and rape among women, and about 6 percent of male undergrads also become victims of sexual assault. Yet, a U.S. Senate survey last year of 440 four-year higher education institutions found that more than 40 percent of the schools had not conducted a single investigation into allegations of sexual violence. The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights is now investigating approximately 100 schools for failure to comply with federal law in preventing, investigating and reporting incidents of sexual assault on their campuses, possibly jeopardizing Title IX funding for those institutions.

The Act will ensure that Illinois colleges and universities:

- Develop a clear, comprehensive campus sexual violence policy, including detailed incident reporting options and university response guidelines;
- Notify student survivors about their rights, including their right to confidentiality, and the protections the university can provide to ensure the student's health and safety, such as obtaining an order of protection, changing class schedules or campus housing, and the availability of medical and counseling services;

- Provide a confidential advisor to survivors to help them understand their options to report the crime and seek medical and legal assistance;
- Adopt a fair, balanced process for adjudicating allegations of sexual violence; and
- Train students and campus employees to prevent sexual violence and improve awareness and responsiveness to allegations of sexual violence.

The law builds on the Attorney General's work spanning more than a decade to protect survivors of sexual violence and to strengthen their rights. Madigan has led an effort to significantly increase the number of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) in hospitals throughout Illinois and worked to pass legislation to mandate the testing of sexual assault evidence kits. Madigan's office has funded dozens of organizations that provide critical services to survivors and strengthened Illinois law to protect victims of stalking, a crime that is more likely to occur on college campuses and that can lead to sexual violence and other crimes.

The Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act goes into effect Aug. 1, 2016.

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