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**ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN CALLS ON SECRETARY DEVOS TO MAINTAIN PROTECTIONS FOR SURVIVORS OF CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT**

**Chicago** — Attorney General Lisa Madigan, along with 19 other attorneys general, today sent a letter to Education Secretary Betsy DeVos expressing concern over reports the U.S. Department of Education is preparing to roll back important protections for survivors of sexual assault on college campuses. Madigan and the other attorneys general urged Secretary DeVos to keep these protections in place and called on her to work collaboratively with them to take action to end sexual violence on campus.

Incidents of sexual assault on college campuses are widespread. The U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics found that, on average, 20.5 percent of college women had experienced sexual assault since entering college. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that one in five women experienced sexual assault in their lifetimes. Moreover, the vast majority of these incidents go unreported. According to a study from the American Association of Universities, reporting rates for some types of assaults were as low as five percent, in part due to survivors' concerns about coming forward.

"Campus sexual assault is a serious issue that requires a thoughtful response," Madigan said. "Unfortunately, the Department of Education's priority is not the safety and well-being of students."

The Department of Education's current guidance was first issued in 2011 and later clarified in 2014. The guidance instructs colleges on how they must address sexual assault incidents under Title IX. These steps include appointing a Title IX coordinator, requiring mandatory reporting by responsible school officials, and implementing procedures for handling investigations and hearings.

According to The Chronicle of Higher Education's Title IX tracker, as of July 9, 2017 there have been 408 investigations of colleges for their handling of reports of sexual violence. Of those investigations, 64 have been resolved and 344 remain open.

Of particular concern to Madigan and the other attorneys general are the comments from Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Candice Jackson, who claimed that 90 percent of campus sexual assault allegations "fall into the category of 'we were both drunk,' 'we broke up, and six months later I found myself under a Title IX investigation because she just decided that our last sleeping together was not quite right.'"

The letter reaffirmed the attorneys general's commitment to working collaboratively with Secretary DeVos and the Department of Education to address the problem of sexual assault, including suggesting the Secretary engage with a bipartisan group of attorneys general and other stakeholders to discuss collaboration.

Attorney General Madigan has worked for more than a decade to protect survivors of sexual violence and strengthen their rights. She championed and passed the Preventing Sexual Violence in Higher Education Act that went into effect Aug. 1, 2016, making Illinois a national leader in how colleges and universities prevent and address sexual assaults.

Joining Madigan in sending today's letter are the attorneys general from: California, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Virginia.

A link to today's letter be found [here](#).

