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**Representative Robin Bartleman and Senator Lori Berman
Re-Introduce Legislation to Protect Victims' Privacy and
Anonymity**

TALLAHASSEE - To end the victimization and stem the reluctance to report sexual violence out of fear, **Representative Robin Bartleman (D-Weston)** and **Senator Lori Berman (D-Delray Beach)** have re-filed legislation from last year to ensure that any victim of such a horrendous act would have to give express written consent to any person or entity in possession of the victim's information in order for their name to be disclosed in any public proceeding.

[HB 775/SB 1084](#) is designed to plug a gaping loophole in current state law that allows the names or identifying information of survivors who report such crimes to others, including employers and schools, to be disclosed, including information or records created for a potential case against the perpetrator. Perpetrators or other third parties who may be responsible can also threaten public exposure of the survivor's identity in order to discourage reporting of the crimes to law enforcement, school administrators, employers and others.

Representative Bartleman stated, "Senator Berman and I have spent the last year refining this important legislation because we believe this bill is necessary to protect victims of sexual assault. They are entitled to access Florida's courts without fear of retaliation and should not be re-traumatized and threatened with public exposure for reporting a crime of this nature. House Bill 775 will protect the anonymity of a survivor."

"We know that many sex criminals victimize numerous others unless stopped by law enforcement," said **Senator Berman**. "But we also know that many victims are reluctant to come forward out of fear for their attacker, or feeling that somehow they were to blame for the assault. This bill helps prevent breaches in their security so that justice can prevail for these victims. Survivors deserve our support and encouragement and that begins by assuring them of their privacy."

The Florida Council Against Sexual Violence, Palm Beach County Victims' Services and the Sexual Assault Response Team are also all in support of this legislation. "As

attorneys who work solely with victims of sexual violence, the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence's legal team sees first-hand the toll that releases of information, whether intentional or negligent, have on victims' mental and physical states and, consequently, their willingness to access supportive and trauma-informed services," said Theresa Prichard, Associate Director and General Counsel of the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence. "Victims' rights to privacy are essential to their healing and our team advocates for clients in ensuring these rights are honored. SB 1044 provides specific protection to survivors' privacy and safety, helping to alleviate re-traumatization, and enshrining a victim's right to control what information they release and to whom."

The bill has been filed for the 2022 legislative session, which begins Tuesday, January 11, 2022.

Please call Florida's Statewide Abuse Hotline at 1-888-956-7273 if you or a loved one ever needs to reach out for help.

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