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The Advocates for Human Rights and WATCH join hands to enhance court monitoring to improve safety and security of women in Minnesota

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (June 21, 2019) --- Minneapolis-based WATCH, a premier court monitoring and judicial policy organization, will become a part of The Advocates for Human Rights. The two organizations will combine a host of synergies to greatly enhance the protection of women and increase the focus on gender-based human rights violations in Minnesota.

WATCH brings 27 years of expertise, methodology and volunteers to boost The Advocates' immigration court monitoring efforts and to provide more training and technical assistance to The Advocates' global women's human rights partners. Volunteer-based WATCH has worked to make the justice system more responsive to crimes of violence against women and children, focusing on greater safety for victims of violence and accountability for their offenders.

"We are thrilled to join hands with WATCH, whose deep experience parallels our women's human rights initiatives," said Jim O'Neal, chair of the board of The Advocates. "WATCH's expertise will also augment our established immigration court monitoring and will provide technical assistance to our global partners. Together, we will be able to continue our unyielding commitment to help keep women safe in our home community and around the world."

Without monitoring and accountability, systems fail to protect women. By integrating new and existing volunteers, both Minneapolis-based organizations will collectively continue to use court monitoring and documentation to change and implement laws to end violence against women.

"We are honored that the work of WATCH will continue as a project of The Advocates for Human Rights," said Susan Lenfestey, WATCH's founder. "The Advocates is not only a highly respected and stable organization, it is a leader in promoting the rights of women, and in fighting trafficking of women and girls, both here and abroad. We are also delighted that former WATCH staffers, Ellen McDaniel and Elizabeth Montgomery, will join The Advocates to ensure a seamless transition of WATCH's court monitoring programs."

WATCH has been monitoring Hennepin County Courts for more than two decades and has recently added court monitoring in Ramsey and Washington counties. Its established court monitoring of trafficking cases complements The Advocates' decade of work to combat sex trafficking in Minnesota.

Founded in 1983, The Advocates implements international human rights standards to promote civil society and reinforce the rule of law. By involving volunteers in research, education, and advocacy, the organization builds broad constituencies in the United States and select global communities.

The Advocates' work also includes the fight against human trafficking in Minnesota. Earlier this year, it published *Labor Trafficking Protocol Guidelines, Safe Harbor For All*, and launched research to update its 2008 *Sex Trafficking Needs Assessment* for the State of Minnesota.

<http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/trafficking>

About The Advocates for Human Rights

Envisioning a world in which every person lives with dignity, freedom, justice, equality, and peace, The Advocates for Human Rights works to change systems and conditions that cause human rights abuses. The Advocates investigates and exposes human rights violations; represents people seeking asylum; trains and assists human rights defenders; and develops partnerships and mobilizes volunteers to address some of the most pressing issues of our time. www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org.

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