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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Regina, SK – In response to the 2021-22 provincial budget to allocate \$886.6 million in funding to the justice system, SASS commends the efforts of the Government of Saskatchewan in building safer communities and protecting the people of Saskatchewan.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a further increase in various forms of violence and SASS anticipates that the numbers will continue to rise as communities begin to open and people who have been affected by violence during isolation feel safe to seek out support services. Our communities in rural and remote areas of Saskatchewan are the most at risk for violence and continue to have the greatest need for accessible support and services.

SASS is hopeful that the proposed development and improvement opportunities for the province's justice system will aid in the safety and well-being of individuals who are at risk of violence, fleeing violent situations, or healing from violence-related trauma.

In addition, SASS is pleased to be included in the budget increase of \$800,000 for interpersonal and domestic violence, especially the proposed expansion of the Violence Against Women Advocate Case Review (VACR) project. VACR launched in 2019 through collaborative efforts between Regina Police Service and Regina Sexual Assault Centre, facilitated by SASS. The goal of the project is to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of police investigations in sexual assault cases by leveraging the trauma-informed lens and expertise of local front-line sexual violence advocates so all survivors have equitable access to the justice system when and if they choose to report to police.

SASS looks forward to collaborating with key stakeholders in expanding the Violence Against Women Advocate Case Review in communities across our province.

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