



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Sexual Assault Kits Bill Receives Senate Hearing

Madison--- Today, the Senate Committee on Insurance, Financial Services, Government Oversight and Courts held a public hearing on legislation introduced by Rep. David Steffen (R-Howard) and Sen. Rob Cowles (R-Green Bay) which creates procedures for the collection and processing of sexual assault kits.

“This bill sets establishes timelines and protocols for nurses and members of law enforcement to prevent a future backlog of sexual assault kits, ensure a proper chain of evidence, preserving of these kits throughout the statute of limitations, and most importantly, provide certainty to sexual assault survivors seeking justice. Providing clarity and certainty to survivors with evidence collected from a sexual assault may help lead to more survivors seeking justice and may further lead to more successful investigations and prosecutions.” said Sen. Cowles.

One out of every six American women in her lifetime is a victim of attempted or completed rape. The current backlog in rape kits nationwide underscores a devastating gap in the criminal justice system. Recently, the State of Wisconsin completed testing on thousands of previously un-submitted sexual assault kits that had accumulated for many years while in the possession of local law enforcement agencies and hospitals. We need to ensure that all sexual assault kits are processed in the future.

“We owe it to sexual assault survivors and their families to ensure that local law enforcement and hospitals submit sexual assault kits to the state crime lab quickly in order to avoid any unnecessary delays. Every single assault kit that is untested represents a human being who went through an awful trauma, and they deserve to have their case fully investigated.” said Rep. Steffen.

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