



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Sexual Assault Kit Requirements Proposed *Author of 2022 reforms declares proposal “necessary, final step” to preventing processing backlogs*

Madison, WI – State Representative David Steffen (R-Howard) and State Senator Jesse James (R-Altoona) announced legislation to create a deadline for the processing of a sexual assault kit by the State Crime Lab. The Crime Lab operates under the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice, and is responsible for the testing and processing of kits received by law enforcement after an assault has taken place.

“Until now, every entity involved in the processing of a sexual assault kit has had a timeline it must adhere to, except the Department of Justice,” said Rep. Steffen. “Victims deserve the swiftest possible course of action by the state. This legislation is the necessary, final step to ensuring the timely processing of sexual assault kits at every point in the process, from beginning to end.”

The legislation mandates that the Crime Lab begin processing a kit within 5 days of receiving it from a law enforcement agency and complete the process within 60 days. It also specifies the situations in which these deadlines are applicable, including situations in which consent to process has been granted and the identity of the perpetrator is not known, kits collected as part of a law enforcement-determined suspicious death, and kits that have been requested in writing by law enforcement, district attorneys, and others who are authorized under statute to request the Lab to conduct an investigation.

“We need to ensure that we never experience this type of backlog again,” said Senator James. “We are proud to do what is right and will always take steps to protect our victims and hold offenders accountable.”

This legislation is the result of extensive discussion with the bill authors and the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

For more information please contact Representative Steffen or Senator James. Their offices can be reached at Rep.Steffen@legis.wisconsin.gov or Sen.James@legis.wisconsin.gov.

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