

New Laws to Prevent Another Rape Kit Backlog

Written by WisDems Press

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<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/rape-1-s5.gif>



Gov. Evers and AG Kaul Deliver Bipartisan Bills Supporting Survivors of Sexual Assault

MADISON - This week, Governor Evers, joined by Attorney General Josh Kaul, signed two bipartisan bills designed to support sexual assault survivors and prevent a backlog of rape kits in the system. The Attorney General's Sexual Assault Response Team played a key role in developing this legislation.

Gov. Evers and Attorney General Kaul have been fighting for transparency and accountability in the state's testing process for sexual assault kits since taking office. Their leadership on this legislation ensures Wisconsin will be a safer place for all.

Read more about the legislation below.

UpNorthNews: [Evers Signs Two Bills Aimed at Preventing Another Rape Kit Backlog](#)

Two bills were signed into law Monday to prevent another rape kit backlog by establishing a procedure for procuring, storing, and processing the kits. The measures will also create a system that allows sexual assault survivors to track the status and progress of their kits.

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Rape kits are used to collect forensic evidence after a person is sexually assaulted, but Wisconsin's backlog for years meant thousands of victims of sexual assault saw no meaningful justice because evidence went untested. According to End the Backlog, a national organization dedicated to fighting rape kit backlogs, Wisconsin had more than 6,800 untested kits in 2014.



"Victims and survivors of sexual assault have already gone through the unimaginable, and their path to justice should never be obstructed or delayed," said Gov. Tony Evers in a press release after he signed the new bills. "I am proud to sign these bills today, increasing transparency and accountability in the state's testing process for sexual assault kits to help prevent future delays in justice for victims, while empowering survivors with resources to track their kits directly."

[...]

In 2015, the year after an audit discovered Wisconsin's backlog, the Wisconsin Department of Justice received \$4 million to address the backlog, but former Attorney General Brad Schimel came under fire for the slow pace with which they were cleared.



Attorney General Josh Kaul joined Evers and lawmakers for the signing of the bills into law on Monday.

"I'm proud that we were able to bring folks together across the aisle to enact this important public safety legislation that will help get justice for survivors and help put violent criminals behind bars," Kaul said in a press statement. "Thank you to the survivors, law enforcement officers, victim service providers, prosecutors, sexual assault nurse examiners, victim advocates, and many people at DOJ who committed countless hours to developing and advocating for this legislation. Wisconsin will be safer because this bill has become law."