



Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force

Testimony in support of SB 960
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Submitted by: Michele Roland-Schwartz, Executive Director

March 21, 2017

Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

On behalf of the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force, I submit this testimony in strong support of SB 960, which would restore the definition of an anonymous kit to a sexual assault evidence kit collected from a victim who has not participated with a law enforcement agency in the creation of a report of the sexual assault. Passage of SB 960 would align Oregon's definition of an anonymous kit with the national definition¹, also known as "non-reporting kits" or "non-investigative kits"².

The Violence Against Women Act of 2005 requires states, as a condition of funding, to provide victims of sexual assault access to a medical-forensic exam without compelling them to make a report to law enforcement³. Victims who want and need medical treatment after a sexual assault may not be ready to make a report to law enforcement. The reasons for not reporting are numerous, but include shame, embarrassment, fear of retaliation, being blamed or feel like they will not be believed⁴. Providing an option for victims to get access to quality medical-forensic care, provided by a trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE), is critical to reduce the long-term health consequences of sexual assault, to mitigate trauma, and allows the opportunity to collect evidence that may help if and when the victim decides to make a report.

SB 960 is a simple fix with a large impact on our systems response to ensuring a victim-centered, trauma-informed approach to victims of sexual violence. For this reason, we urge the passage of SB 960.

¹ National Center for Victims of Crime: <https://victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/dna-resource-center/untested-sexual-assault-kits/unreported-sexual-assault-kits>

² US Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (2017) *Sexual Assault Kit Testing Initiatives and Non-investigative Kits*: <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/page/file/931391/download>

³ VAWA 2005 Summary of Provisions: http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/file/Projects_SART_Team_Non-Reporting-Options.pdf

⁴ Aequitas (2014) *Anonymous Reporting in Sexual Assault Cases*: <http://www.aequitasresource.org/Anonymous-Reporting-in-Sexual-Assault-Cases.pdf>