

HB 4049 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Ways and Means

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Meeting Dates: 2/26, 2/28

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Department of State Police to establish committee on tracking of sexual assault forensic evidence kits (SAFE kits). Specifies duties of committee and membership. Requires Department of State Police to implement the committee's recommendations for a SAFE kit tracking system. Provides requirements of tracking system. Requires all law enforcement agencies, medical facilities, crime laboratories, and others to fully participate in tracking system within one year of system becoming operational. Requires status report to Task Force on Testing of Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Kits, Governor, and Attorney General no later than January 1, 2019. Updates the timeline for Task Force on Testing of Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Kits, extending its existence until July 31, 2020. Requires Task Force to monitor implementation of SAFE kit tracking system and to include status update on implementation within its final report to the legislature. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Progress to date on completing the backlog of SAFE Kits
- SAFE Kit tracking system developed by the City of Portland

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Clarifies that the Department of State Police may contract with public or private entities to obtain SAFE kit tracking software systems.

BACKGROUND:

Sexual assault forensic evidence kits (SAFE kits) are a series of tests and evidence collected from a victim of sexual assault. SAFE kits are collected in a medical setting by a specially trained nurse. The evidence gathered includes DNA, which may be tested in an effort to learn or verify the identity of an assailant. In 2016, Oregon began aggressively testing the backlog of untested kits. At the start of 2016, there were approximately 5,600 untested SAFE kits in Oregon. While great efforts have been made to reduce the backlog, other factors have increased the number of kits being tested. At the beginning of 2017, the Oregon State Police (OSP) had 742 SAFE kits in its backlog. By the end of 2017, OSP had tested 1,062 kits and had 1,194 untested kits pending for testing.

House Bill 4049 specifies that OSP shall form a committee to develop a SAFE kit tracking system. The measure specifies the duties of the committee and its members, and requires a report to the SAFE Kit Task Force, the Governor, and Attorney General by January 1, 2019. Additionally, the measure extends the lifetime of the Task Force until July 31, 2020.