ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

House Bill 31: Sexual Assault Examination Kits

Sponsor Statement

"An act relating to law enforcement training in domestic violence and sexual assault; relating to sexual assault investigation protocols; requiring an inventory and reports on untested sexual assaults examination kits; and providing for an effective date."

HB 31 would mandate training for all law enforcement on sexual assault response, would create protocols for any sexual assault examination kit as well as collect as required an inventory of the kits and reports from law enforcement agencies on the kits storage and retention of the kits.

Alaska rates consistently at the top of sexual assault and domestic violence cases in the country and many of the perpetrators remain untried by the criminal justice system. This bill endeavors to eliminate that injustice. When tested, DNA evidence contained by rape kits can be an **incredibly powerful tool to solve and prevent crime**. It can identify an unknown assailant and confirm the presence of a known suspect. It can affirm the survivor's account of the attack and discredit the suspect. It can connect the suspect to other crime scenes and identify serial offenders. It can exonerate the wrongly convicted or accused.

The bill creates a standard protocol for 200 law enforcement agencies. HB 31 will support the effort to maintain DNA and other evidence that can bring criminals to justice. A recent case in Alaska used DNA evidence to charge a serial rapist for a series of attacks in 2014 that also led to linking the perpetrator to crimes as far back as 2001.

House Bill 31 calls for development of a statewide protocol for processing of rape kits to be used by the 200 law enforcement agencies. The bill also stipulates that the Department of Public Safety transmit a report on the issue to the Alaska Legislature. The report must contain the exact number of untested sexual assault examination kits and a plan for addressing the backlog of untested kits.