

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

House Bill 20

"An Act requiring law enforcement agencies to send sexual assault examination kits for testing within six months after collection; and providing for an effective date."

Sponsor Statement

House Bill 20 would help prevent a backlog of untested sexual assault examination kits or rape kits, by requiring testing within six months. According to a Fall 2018 report from the Alaska Department of Public Safety, to the Alaska Legislature, there is a backlog of 2,568 untested rape kits. With the passage of this bill, rape kits would no longer pile up on shelves and collect dust. Instead they would be tested in a timely manner.

In many cases, rape kits are evidence of heinous crimes. Every day a sexual assault kit goes untested is another day that a predator is on the streets endangering us all. A six-month deadline should be more than enough time to send these kits to the lab, get the results, and start the process of justice for victims.

Having thousands of untested rape kits is not acceptable when Alaska leads the nation in the rate of rapes and sexual assaults. The DNA evidence in those untested kits can and should be used to identify abusers and provide justice to victims.

It is time for the State of Alaska to take concrete steps to address sexual assault. House Bill 20 would provide law enforcement with the evidence they need to prosecute sexual offenders and as a result would make Alaska a safer place and help address the horrendous problem of sexual assault in our State.