



Alameda County District Attorney Announces Governor Newsom signed

Legislation Requiring Online Portal for Survivors to Track Sexual Assault Kits

SACRAMENTO — Alameda County District Attorney Nancy E. O'Malley announced that legislation sponsored by her office that will help survivors of sexual assault track their sexual assault evidence kits, was signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom.

Senate Bill 215, authored by Senator Connie Leyva, creates a new victim portal in California's existing sexual assault kit tracking system, the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Tracking (SAFE-T) database. Survivors of sexual assault will be able to anonymously, and electronically, track and receive updates regarding the status, location, and information of their sexual assault evidence kit. The sexual assault kit tracking system, with its secure victim access portal, allows the survivors to control when they obtain critical information about the status and location of their kits.

"Sexual assault survivors should have the right to know whether their evidence kits have been tested. After bravely undergoing an exam after an assault, this law will provide survivors with the ability to track the kit and the peace of mind to ensure that law enforcement is doing their statutory duty to analyze the evidence in a timely manner," said DA O'Malley.

Survivors assume their sexual assault evidence kits are being tested, but that is not always the case. California law requires that all law enforcement agencies submit sexual assault kits within 20 days of receiving them and have a crime lab test them no longer than 120 days following receipt.

"I am so proud that we are once again prioritizing and empowering rape survivors by making sure that they are able to easily and privately find out where their rape kit is in the process," said Senator Leyva. "A rape kit exam is invasive and retraumatizing, so survivors should absolutely be able to track their rape kit every step of the way."

This legislative victory comes after many years of advocacy on this issue. DA O'Malley is a statewide and national leader who has long fought for the elimination of the sexual assault kit backlog not only in Alameda County, but throughout California and the United States. Her advocacy has been key in securing federal funding that enables law enforcement throughout the country to identify and eliminate their own backlogs.

In 2013, DA O'Malley embarked on the task of identifying all untested sexual assault kits in Alameda County and discovered a countywide backlog of nearly 1,900 kits. Although there are currently no untested kits in Alameda County, there is still work to be done in other counties.

“I want to thank Governor Newsom for signing this legislation, our incredible author Senator Leyva, the California Legislature for passing it, as well as co-sponsors the Joyful Heart Foundation and Natasha’s Justice Project for continuing to prioritize the rights of sexual assault survivors,” DA O’Malley stated.

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