

WisDems: ICYMI: Schimel grossly misrepresented scope of rape kit backlog

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Thanks to Brad Schimel's neglect and lack of guidance, hundreds of untested rape kits are discovered to have involved unknown suspects

MADISON — Recent reporting from the USA Today Network [revealed](#) that “about 400 untested [rape] kits,” not a “small number” as AG Brad Schimel’s Department of Justice had previously claimed, involved unknown suspects. This potentially means that 400 alleged rapists have had the ability to re-offend in the years it has taken Brad Schimel to do his job.

According to the report, local police stations were given conflicting guidance, if any, from Schimel’s DOJ on when to send rape kits to be tested. Green Bay police Lt. Jeff Brester was quoted describing the situation saying “I don’t know what the heck to do.”

It’s possible that a significant number of these untested kits involve individuals unknown to authorities; USA Today Network found that of the 20 DNA results from July to December of 2017, “testing has identified a suspect or person of interest who was not previously known to investigators in 11 cases.”

Despite the small number of kits that have been tested, investigators have already been able to file charges against individuals where there was a DNA match. The Post Crescent [reported](#) this week that “A rape kit tested five years after the evidence was collected led prosecutors to file charges this week against a Marion

man accused of sexually assaulting a 17-year-old girl he had just met.” In the five years it took Schimel and his DOJ to test the rape kit that lead to the charge, the accused offender faced no consequences and the teenage survivor of the rape received no justice.

“The incompetence Brad Schimel has displayed in his handling of the rape kit backlog in Wisconsin is disqualifying,” said Melanie Conklin, communications director for the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. “These are serious criminal cases that when ignored can have devastating consequences. For Schimel to fail on such a colossal scale and deny justice to so many is unforgivable.

“We need an Attorney General who is dedicated to Wisconsin’s safety and security. Brad Schimel clearly isn’t up to the task.”