

# Rep. Subcek: Put victims first by passing bipartisan Bill (AB 214/SB 200) to eliminate future backlogs for sexual assault kits

Posted on Tuesday, Feb 11, 2020

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MADISON – Today, Representative Lisa Subeck (D-Madison) called on Republican leadership in the State Assembly to immediately schedule a vote on Assembly Bill 214/Senate Bill 200 (AB 214/SB 200) to prevent future backlogs of testing of sexual assault kits. Wisconsin recently eliminated a longstanding backlog with the help of a federal grant program. Under the previous administration, untested kits had sat in storage with law enforcement agencies across the state, never making it to the state crime lab for testing. Without legislation outlining a procedure to ensure kits make it to the state crime lab for prompt testing moving forward, the state could quickly face more backlogs.

“When sexual assault kits go untested, justice is denied or delayed for victims,” said Rep. Subeck. “Worse yet, perpetrators of sexual assault may remain on the streets of our communities to rape again.”

AB 214/SB 200 passed the Senate unanimously in October, and is cosponsored by a majority of the members of the Assembly, virtually guaranteeing its passage should it be brought to a vote. If passed, AB 214/SB 200 could be sent to the Governor immediately for his signature. However, despite being drafted by Wisconsin’s former Republican Attorney General and current Democratic Attorney General, and despite significant input from law enforcement and medical experts and victim advocates, Assembly leadership has refused to bring the bill for a vote. Instead, Republicans have scheduled a vote on a newly drafted, politically divisive, fast-tracked bill (AB 844).

“Even the bill’s own author describes AB 844 as a grab bag, and admits it was drafted without input from any stakeholders or experts,” said Rep. Subeck.

At a recent hearing of the Assembly Committee on Health, experts and advocates testified overwhelmingly in favor of AB 214/SB 200 and vehemently opposed the newly introduced AB 844. The committee heard from dozens of survivors of sexual assault, law enforcement, medical experts, and victim advocates, all of whom support AB 214/SB 200. Experts raised concerns that provisions in AB 844 could be detrimental to their work.

“Republicans are playing petty, partisan games while justice for sexual assault victims and the safety of our communities hangs in the balance. In their ridiculous quest to block any so-called victories on the part of the administration, they are all too willing to throw survivors of sexual assault under the bus,” said Rep. Subeck. “Today, Republicans have a chance to put sexual assault victims and public safety ahead of politics by passing AB 214/SB 200 to ensure justice for sexual assault victims is not delayed.”