

Gov. Evers: Takes action on two bills to support victims and survivors of sexual assault

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WEST BEND — Gov. Tony Evers today signed Senate Bill 71, now 2021 Wisconsin Act 116, establishing a statutory procedure for collecting and submitting sexual assault kits to state crime laboratories for processing and retention—a similar provision was included in the governor’s 2021-23 biennial budget proposal. Additionally, he signed Senate Bill 94, now 2021 Wisconsin Act 117, creating a tracking system for survivors to access information about the status of their sexual assault kit as it moves through the criminal justice process.

“Victims and survivors of sexual assault have already gone through the unimaginable, and their path to justice should never be obstructed or delayed,” said Gov. Evers. “I am proud to sign these bills today, increasing transparency and accountability in the state’s testing process for sexual assault kits to help prevent future delays in justice for victims while empowering survivors with resources to track their kits directly.”

[Senate Bill 71](#), now 2021 Wisconsin Act 116:

Creates a statutory procedure for collecting, submitting and retaining sexual assault kits;

Adds a duty for the Department of Justice to collect information on collected sexual assault kits;

Requires the Department of Justice to publish, at least annually, data on law enforcement compliance with collecting information on collected sexual assault kits; and

Creates civil and criminal immunity for healthcare professionals conducting a sexual assault forensic examination pursuant to informed consent or a court order.

[Senate Bill 94](#), now 2021 Wisconsin Act 117:

Requires the Department of Justice to establish the Wisconsin Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System, a database to provide sexual assault victims access to information about the status of any sexual assault kit the victim has provided;

States that when a law enforcement agency or healthcare professional collects evidence, or when the crime laboratories perform a DNA analysis of a sexual assault kit, each shall enter information in the Wisconsin Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System; and

Determines that the Wisconsin Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System must provide victims the ability to anonymously track the location and status of their sexual assault kit and allow criminal justice stakeholders the ability to update and track the location and status of kits.