

Sen. Wirch: Applauds signing of sexual assault kit legislation

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Madison – Sen. Bob Wirch (D-Somers) is commending Governor Tony Evers for signing into law two pieces of legislation that will streamline the processing of sexual assault kits and make it easier for sexual assault survivors to track kits from their case. While the bills had bipartisan support, they had been held up due to objections from some Assembly Republicans.

“I am excited and relieved that these bills have finally become law, and I want to thank Governor Evers for his quick action to sign them after unnecessary delay by Assembly Republicans. Survivors of sexual assault deserve to have confidence that their case is being handled properly and in a timely manner, and these bills will help restore some of that confidence in the system after years of backlogs,” Wirch said.

In 2014, the state discovered a backlog of nearly 7,000 untested sexual assault kits, some dating back to the 1980s. Since then, Attorneys General of both parties have prioritized elimination of the backlog. Current Attorney General Josh Kaul made this a cornerstone of his administration and was a driving force behind the legislation. Both bills passed the Senate last session, one on a voice vote and one by unanimous vote. The Republican majority in the Assembly wouldn't give the bills a public hearing, let alone a vote. Kaul and a bipartisan group of legislators continued to work on the legislation, and in March 2021, the Senate again passed both bills. After pressure from survivors and advocates, the bills finally made it through the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety and were passed by the full Assembly.

“Attorney General Kaul also deserves thanks for his hard work and determination to

get these bills passed. He didn't give up, and the people of Wisconsin will be safer because of it," stated Wirch.