

WCASA, Joyful Heart Foundation: Wisconsin passes multiple bills in support of survivors of sexual assault

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NEW YORK — The Joyful Heart Foundation and the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault applaud Wisconsin representatives in their passage of SB71 and SB94—two bills that together would vastly improve around the sexual assault kit handling process. SB71 and SB94, would now mandate delivery of rape kits to the appropriate testing labs and establish a statewide rape kit tracking system, respectively.

SB71 will ensure that moving forward, kits do not languish on shelves and will prevent another backlog from happening again. SB94 would create an online system through which survivors will be able to track the status of their kit when it's convenient and safe for them. In addition, law enforcement and the crime lab will be able to know how the kit is moving through the testing process. Passage of this legislation could ultimately bring answers and justice to victims of sexual assault, take dangerous offenders off the streets, and increase public safety.

“Behind every rape kit is a person—a sexual assault survivor—waiting for justice. By passing SB71 and SB94, Wisconsin has taken meaningful steps to bring a path to healing and justice to survivors,” says Ilse Knecht, Director of Policy and Advocacy at the Joyful Heart Foundation. “These bills tell survivors they matter, and supports

their healing by enabling them to track the location and status of their rape kits.”

“These bills are a critical part of a trauma-informed response to sexual violence”, says Pennie Meyers, Executive Director of WCASA.” They restore power to survivors by providing them with clear expectations regarding evidence collection while also offering them the ability to anonymously obtain information about their kit at a time and place of their choosing.”

If you would like an interview or additional comment by Ilse Knecht of the Joyful Heart Foundation or Ian Henderson of WCASA, please feel free to contact me to set up an interview. Additionally, you can learn more about the Joyful Heart Foundation’s legislative efforts in Wisconsin at <http://www.endthebacklog.org/-wisconsin>