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Senator Jacque Introduces Comprehensive Legislation in Support of Sexual Assault Survivors

Works with RISE and advocates to expand victim rights, ensure prompt testing

(Madison, WI) Today Senator André Jacque (R – De Pere) formally introduced comprehensive legislation supported by several other legislators to deliver justice to survivors of sexual assault and their families. Senator Jacque released the following statement:

“In terms of truly making sure there’s not going to be a backlog going forward, I think it’s essential that we take the step other states have done, which is requiring the kits actually be tested within a reasonable time frame,” Senator Jacque said. *“It’s also critical that we safeguard and expand the rights of survivors, follow appropriate best practices in assault kit handling and tracking, and protect the public and survivors from being re-victimized.”*

The legislation seamlessly integrates the Sexual Assault Survivor Bill of Rights previously introduced by Senator Jacque and Representative Janel Brandtjen, kit processing and retention guidelines, a kit tracking system, and other provisions in a way that eliminates conflicting provisions. Using language from the Bill of Rights, it prevents a future sexual assault test kit backlog by requiring the Department of Justice to test all new kits within 90 days, as other states have already set in statute.

Senator Jacque worked closely with the prominent state and national sexual assault survivor network RISE in developing the legislation:

“In Wisconsin there is an estimated 6,800 untested, potentially untracked rape kits,” said Colleen Zolper, local Wisconsin Riser, in her testimony. *“A number of these survivors, after deciding to pursue prosecution, endured the re-traumatization of learning their rape kits have been lost or destroyed; a devastating blow considering what they endured with medical and legal procedures in the aftermath of their assault.”*

“Sexual assault survivors not just in Wisconsin, but in every state, should have the rights guaranteed to them by the federal law,” said Amanda Nguyen, founder and CEO of Rise. *“We at Rise are proud to stand with Senator Jacque in advancing this legislation, and now we urge the State of Wisconsin to act.”*

Sen. André Jacque represents Northeast Wisconsin’s First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.

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