

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support – \$4 million to the Sexual Assault Evidence Submission Grant Program

Dear Governor Newsom,

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to include \$4 million dedicated to the Sexual Assault Evidence Submission Grant Program as proposed in the Assembly version of the budget in the FY 21-22 budget, to ensure that a law enforcement agency submits sexual assault forensic evidence to a crime lab for testing.

In 2019, the Legislature appropriated \$2 million in grant funding in the Budget Act of 2019 to assist local law enforcement agencies with the process of submitting and testing sexual assault forensic evidence. Local law enforcement agencies in the State of California that needed sexual assault evidence submitted and tested were eligible to apply for this grant.

However, according to the Department of Justice 2020 report, there remains 13,929 kits that have not been tested throughout the State of California. This is simply a nightmare for those victims. If this continues there is a real possibility that the DNA will degrade and not only the victims associated with those kits be denied justice prematurely, but serious and violent rapists will be on our streets to victimize again.

Further, the testing of these kits may have identified offenders who had committed another crime for which they were never previously identified. The National Institute of Justice funded Detroit, Michigan and Houston, Texas to test their unsubmitted sexual assault kits. The results revealed that testing unsubmitted kits can lead to convicting hundreds to thousands of serial offenders; such testing identified over 400 serial rapists in Detroit alone.

With over 13,000 kits in California and over 300,000 kits nationally sitting on shelves untested, survivors are deprived of healing and, often, the justice they rightfully deserve. For these reasons, we strongly urge your inclusion of this important allocation in the budget.

Sincerely,

Madison Campbell, Co-Founder and CEO, Leda Health
Rebecca Gonzales, Director of Government Relations and Political Affairs, National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter
Hillary Larkin PA-C, Vice President, California Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners Association
Catherine Rossi MSN,FNP-BC, RN,SANE-A, SANE-P, DF-AFN, President Academy of Forensic Nursing

Grace Verbrugge, Co-Coordinator of Communications and Outreach at University Survivors Movement

CC:

The Honorable Toni Atkins President Pro Tempore, California State Senate

The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker, California State Assembly

The Honorable Nancy Skinner Chair, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review

The Honorable Phil Ting Chair, Assembly Budget & Fiscal Review