



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF CRIME LABORATORY DIRECTORS

"Advancing Forensic Science Through Effective Management"

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320 North Flower Street
Santa Ana, CA 92703
(714) 834-6380
BruceH@occl.ocgov.com

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(323) 260-8502
DMGialam@lasd.org

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Michael.Parigian@ventura.org

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SpriggsJ@sacda.org

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7425 Mission Boulevard
Riverside, California 92509
(951) 361-5000
Caroline.Kim@doj.ca.gov

California Association of Crime Laboratory Directors
Position on Assembly Bill 1517: Rape Kit Backlogs

The California Association of Crime Laboratory Directors (CACLD) supports the rapid and quality analysis of rape kits collected in California. We are committed to providing results for both investigatory and legal purposes on criminal cases, including the analysis of rape kits; our mission centers around unbiased, accurate and timely forensic results to our stakeholders on every case the laboratories analyze.

Assembly Bill 1517 (primary author Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner) would require all rape kits be submitted to the crime laboratory within 5 days of collection, with the completion of analysis (including database entry) within 30 days of submission. CACLD applauds the concept of this bill to ensure DNA profiles are available to law enforcement as soon as possible, and to ensure rape kit analysis is not delayed. The value of quickly associating an unknown sexual assault offender to a known offender in the DNA database cannot be understated. CACLD understands the importance of quick turn-around-time in regards to the analysis of rape kits, and to ensure the ultimate goal of holding perpetrators responsible and exonerating the wrongly accused. All victim offenses must be prevented as soon as possible.

CACLD requests the following practical considerations be reviewed before the passage of this bill instructing all rape kits be processed in 30 days.

- 1) While Alameda County has a backlog of rape kits, not all crime laboratories in California are experiencing a backlog of rape kit cases. A survey of rape kit backlogs in crime laboratories should be completed in order to fully understand the problem at hand, as well as turn-around-times for rape kit analysis within each California crime laboratory. The Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting Act (SAFER) of 2013 (located in the Violence Against Women Act passed by Congress) is a starting place to determine the number of rape kits located on law enforcement agency shelves.
- 2) A dialog should ensue between district attorney offices, law enforcement agencies, sexual assault nurses, victim advocate groups and crime laboratory directors within California to determine the best practices for rape kit collection, submission, and analysis of rape kits. This document should be published and be available for all stakeholders.

At this time, CACLD opposes this bill as written but welcomes any opportunity to discuss the resources and procedures in California's crime laboratories in order for a collaborative solution serving all stakeholders.

CACLD Board
March 4, 2014