

To: Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives

From: Donna Greco, Policy Director, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape

June 20, 2017

Re: DNA collection, HB 1523

Dear Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives:

The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) works to eliminate all forms of sexual violence and to advocate for the rights and needs of victims of sexual assault. In partnership with a network of 50 rape crisis centers, PCAR brings help, hope, and healing to all 67 counties in the Commonwealth.

We ask for your support on House Bill 1523, sponsored by Chairman Marsico and scheduled for second consideration today.

This bill would strengthen Pennsylvania's ability to detect and deter repeated crimes by the same individual. The bill expands the crimes for which DNA samples are taken, helping our Commonwealth identify serial offenders and prevent them from offending again. The bill would authorize the state police to use DNA analysis; re-establish a state DNA database and enable DNA to be uploaded in the national DNA database (CODIS); require State Police to develop rules, regulations, and guidelines surrounding DNA analysis to be compliant with federal FBI quality assurance standards; and require an annual report including DNA profiles, timelines, costs, and recommendations.

We know from research and experience, that people who sexually offend often commit multiple crimes over the course of their lives, harming many children, women, and men. Some sexual offenders will harm over 100 victims in their lifetime. People often progress through a spectrum of sexually violent acts, ranging from indecent exposure and sexual harassment to other sexually violent crimes.

However, this pattern can be interrupted. HB 1523 helps equip our state with technology and tools to stop future crimes from happening and to protect public safety.

As we continue to address the current backlogs in our crime laboratories--both in Pennsylvania and nationally--it will be critical that we find ways to strengthen our

capacity to detect and deter serial offenders, while continuing to prioritize and address the rape kit backlog and support victims who are impacted.

I can be reached at dgreco@pcar.org or 717-728-9740, x114, if you would like to discuss this.

Thank you for your leadership and for your commitment to helping sexual assault victims and protecting our communities.

Sincerely,

Donna Greco
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