

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

HB 31 Version U (S STA) Summary of Changes

The House Finance Committee amended HB 31 Version A to remove section 1 – which mandated that law enforcement agencies must send sexual assault kits for testing within 18 months of collection.

The House Finance Committee added language to mandate that all Alaska police officers receive at least 12 hours of sexual assault training, in addition to their existing domestic violation training.

The House Finance Committee added language to require a unified, statewide, victim-centered approach to reporting sexual assault. They approved three reporting options – law enforcement, medical and anonymous.

The sponsor worked with Sen. Coghill to add language from HB 31 to Senate Bill 55, which passed the Legislature in 2017. It required a statewide inventory of sexual assault kits taken as evidence by law enforcement agencies, but not submitted to a laboratory for testing. Department of Public Safety Commissioner Walt Monegan delivered the report to the Legislature in November 2017.

At the request of the sponsor, the Department of Public Safety and victim advocates, on March 22, 2018, the Senate State Affairs Committee amended HB 31 Version J to eliminate one of the three reporting options – the medical option. The two that remain – the law enforcement option and the anonymous option, meet the standards of the US Dept. of Justice best practices.

Dept. of Justice White Paper language

“Testing sexual assault kits associated with victims who obtained medical forensic exams but who have not consented to having the kit tested by law enforcement, can result in a sense of revictimization and can undermine community trust.”

The Senate State Affairs Committee updated the effective dates and updated the language requiring the Department of Public Safety to deliver a report to the Legislature regarding the inventory of untested rape kits by November 1 of each year.